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SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

- - -

Thursday, January 25, 2024

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Special Board meeting held on
Thursday, January 25, 2024, at SEPTA
Headquarters, 1234 Market Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, beginning at
approximately 2:58 p.m., before Kaitlyn
Muchnick, a Professional Reporter and Notary
Public in and for the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania.

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1 ATTENDING THE MEETING AND PRESENT IN THE BOARD
ROOM WERE THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

2

Pasquale T. Deon, Sr., Chairman
3 Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Vice Chairman
Michael A. Carroll, P.E.
4 Mark H. Dambly
Thomas Jay Ellis, Esquire
5 Robert D. Fox, Esquire
Kevin L. Johnson, P.E.
6 William J. Leonard, Esquire
Deborah Mahler
7 Honorable Marian D. Moskowitz
Daniel R. Muroff, Esquire
8 Honorable Martina White

9 ATTENDING THE MEETING VIA WEBEX WERE THE
FOLLOWING BOARD MEMBERS:

10

John F. Cordisco, Esquire
11 Scott C. Freda

12 PRESENT IN THE BOARD ROOM WERE THE FOLLOWING
STAFF MEMBERS:

13

Leslie S. Richards - General Manager/CEO
14 Gino Benedetti, Esquire - General Counsel
Carol R. Looby - Secretary to the Board
15 Francis E. Kelly - Board & Government
Liaison
16 Stephanie Deiger - Chief Human Resources
Officer
17 Jody Holton - Chief Officer, Strategy &
Planning
18 Scott A. Sauer - Chief Officer,
Operations
19 William Webster - Chief Officer,
Communications
20 Martha Behan - Deputy CFO

21 ATTENDING THE MEETING VIA WEBEX WAS THE
FOLLOWING STAFF MEMBER:

22

Nick Grieshaber, Chief Financial
23 Officer/Treasurer

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P R O C E E D I N G S

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon.
There are two Board meetings today,
and I will call the Special Meeting of
the Board to order first.

I'll call roll call of
attendants.

Vice Chairman Lawrence?

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mike Carroll?

MR. CARROLL: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: John Cordisco?

MR. CORDISCO: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mark Dambly?

MR. DAMBLY: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Tom Ellis?

MR. ELLIS: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Rob Fox?

MR. FOX: Here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Scott Freda? Is
he on the phone? All right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Kevin Johnson?

1 MR. JOHNSON: Here.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Bill Leonard?

3 MR. LEONARD: Here.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Debbie Mahler?

5 MS. MAHLER: Here.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner
7 Moskowitz?

8 MS. MOSKOWITZ: Here.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Dan Muroff?

10 MR. MUROFF: Here.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Estaban Vera?

12 He had to go to another meeting.

13 Representative White?

14 REPRESENTATIVE WHITE: Here.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Perfect.

16 Let's start with the Pledge of
17 Allegiance.

18 ALL: "I pledge allegiance to
19 the flag of the United States of
20 America, and to the Republic for which
21 it stands, one nation under God,
22 indivisible, with liberty and justice
23 for all."

24 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Good

1 afternoon. Thank you, everyone, for
2 joining us today. The Board met in
3 executive session prior to this
4 meeting to discuss legal matters.

5 All written comments and voice
6 mail messages that have been received
7 today will be included in the official
8 Board Meeting transcript, which will
9 then be posted to the SEPTA website.

10 If there are speakers who wish
11 to address items on today's agenda,
12 you will be called on before the Board
13 votes. Please limit your remarks to
14 two minutes.

15 Sue Sanderson will present the
16 following resolution.

17 Sue?

18 Good afternoon. I'm here today
19 to ask that the Board approve the
20 memorandum of agreement reached
21 between the Authority and the
22 International Brotherhood of Teamsters
23 Local 500. IBT 500 represents
24 approximately 330 employees including

1 various skilled positions such as
2 medical technicians, customer service
3 representatives, storeroom keepers,
4 telecommunication technicians, and
5 others throughout the Authority.

6 The IBT 500 agreement was set
7 to expire at midnight on January 17th;
8 however, the parties reached an
9 agreement on January 16th. The
10 agreement was ratified by the union
11 membership on Sunday, January 21st.

12 The agreement is for one year,
13 fits within the Authority's budget,
14 and is consistent with the pattern
15 established by TWU 234.

16 I request that the Board
17 approve the memorandum of agreement.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Great. Thank
19 you.

20 Do we have any speakers who
21 wish to comment? Carol, anybody?

22 We'll entertain a motion to
23 adopt this resolution.

24 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: So

1 moved.

2 MR. ELLIS: Second.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions or
4 comments?

5 Hearing none, I'll call the
6 question.

7 All in favor, say "aye."

8 ALL: Aye.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Any abstentions?
10 The resolution is adopted.

11 All right. We are starting off
12 2024 much like it ended last year,
13 facing a major funding challenge.
14 Efforts are continuing with our
15 funding partners in Harrisburg to find
16 a solution.

17 There are a number of great
18 efforts to improve service for our
19 customers underway, and we want to
20 ensure funding is there to support
21 these initiatives.

22 For example, we will vote today
23 on a plan to redesign the bus network
24 so that customers have more reliable

1 and efficient service. With full
2 funding support, much more is
3 possible.

4 As many of you know, this is my
5 last meeting as chairman of the SEPTA
6 Board. It has been my honor to serve
7 in this role. There will be more to
8 say about this later, but I just want
9 to say how grateful I am to everybody
10 here at SEPTA. I know we have a great
11 leadership ready to step up on the
12 SEPTA Board, and I wish you all the
13 best.

14 Vice Chairman Lawrence would
15 like to be recognized.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: I
17 would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 We know you like short
19 meetings.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Uh-huh.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: So I
22 think it's appropriate here at your
23 last one that this will probably be
24 the last longest meeting of your

1 25-year tenure here.

2 As everyone here knows, after
3 29 years as a member of the Board and
4 the last 25 years as chairman, this is
5 Chairman Deon's final Board meeting,
6 and we didn't want to let this moment
7 pass without taking the opportunity to
8 say thank you for your years of
9 service and to congratulate you as you
10 conclude nearly 30 years of service on
11 this Board.

12 And to put this in perspective,
13 SEPTA marks its 60th anniversary this
14 year. So for over half of that time,
15 you've been here in a leadership
16 position.

17 SEPTA and our region are better
18 for your service, and you should take
19 pride in knowing that you leave SEPTA
20 strong enough to weather the
21 significant challenges ahead and
22 nimble enough to seize new
23 opportunities.

24 On a personal note, you know,

1 we've worked together very closely for
2 the last 11 or 12 years. We both
3 enjoy beers and cigars and we love our
4 families. You've taught me a lot
5 about SEPTA, about leadership, and I
6 just want to say personally, it's been
7 my privilege to be able to be
8 alongside you during this time.

9 But there are many who are
10 joining us today to celebrate your
11 legacy and the mark you have left on
12 this transit agency and the region it
13 serves.

14 And to get us started, it's my
15 pleasure to introduce the SEPTA CEO
16 and general manager, Leslie Richards.

17 MS. RICHARDS: Thank you, Vice
18 Chairman.

19 I know, also, a lot of people
20 want to say thank you because there's
21 a lot of thanks here.

22 So I personally want to say
23 thank you, Chairman, but I also speak
24 for over 9,000 employees here as well

1 who want to say thank you.

2 We're very grateful for your 24
3 years of service to SEPTA as the
4 chairman of our Board. For many of
5 us, you're the only chairman that
6 we've ever known, and during that
7 extraordinary tenure, Chairman Deon
8 has put SEPTA on sounder financial
9 footing than it was definitely in 1999
10 when you joined.

11 We've benefited greatly from
12 your relationships, from your
13 political skills. I'm honored that I
14 got to see many of them close up and
15 see how you do your little magic that
16 you do, not quite sure how to
17 categorize it, but you do know how to
18 work both sides of the aisle -- you're
19 masterful, you're skillful --
20 brokering deals to stabilize state
21 funding for public transit. You have
22 always been a voice for us.

23 With that, I know that so many
24 other people also want to lend their

1 congratulations. I will keep it short
2 as a favor.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

4 MS. RICHARDS: So
5 congratulations on this extremely
6 well-deserved retirement.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank
9 you, Leslie.

10 I'm kind of taking over here
11 now, Pat, so just sit back, relax.
12 Just let it happen.

13 It's now my pleasure to
14 introduce a good friend of Chairman
15 Deon and a good friend of mine as
16 well, his hometown senator, Senator
17 Frank Farry.

18 Senator Farry has been a
19 long-time supporter of SEPTA and
20 worked to pass Act 89 in 2013 when he
21 was a member of the house.

22 Senator Farry, thank you for
23 being here today.

24 SENATOR FERRY: Thank you, Ken.

1 I appreciate the opportunity to be
2 here.

3 As Ken mentioned, I've been a
4 long-time friend of Pat and his
5 family. I've actually served as his
6 volunteer fire chief in addition to
7 having spent 14 years as his state rep
8 and now his state senator.

9 I always joked when I was his
10 rep that that literally he was my most
11 high-maintenance constituent out of
12 65,000 people. Now I can say it's out
13 of 270,000 people, but that is said
14 with admiration, because that high
15 maintenance is based on his efforts
16 and his advocacy in large part for
17 SEPTA and for our community.

18 And Pat is always to the point.
19 I think we all know that. There's no
20 beating around the bush. You know
21 what his efforts are, and his efforts
22 are very strong. You know, there's
23 big shoes to fill here by Ken and the
24 rest of the Board members, and I wish

1 you the best in doing that, but I
2 don't think SEPTA would be where it is
3 today without Pat's efforts.

4 You know, we had some
5 challenges with Act 89 and some of the
6 other advocacy efforts we've had in
7 Harrisburg, but we fought hard to get
8 that done and you led the way in a lot
9 of that and you deserve the
10 recognition for it.

11 I have a senate citation, which
12 because of time, I won't read all the
13 "whereas" and conclude with "now,
14 therefore," but you are being
15 recognized by the state senate for
16 your tenure here, and we also had a
17 state flag dedicated to you as well.
18 So I'd like to come and present that.

19 (Applause.)

20 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: All
21 right. Thank you, Senator Farry.

22 I'm now pleased to introduce
23 Chairman Deon's state representative,
24 Joe Hogan, who has a presentation on

1 behalf of the Pennsylvania House of
2 Representatives.

3 Representative Hogan.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HOGAN: Thank
5 you, Ken.

6 You know, I want to echo a lot
7 of the comments that Senator Farry
8 just made. I have only had the
9 opportunity to represent Pat for one
10 year, and I don't think he was as
11 challenging for me as he was for the
12 senator, so I want to thank you for
13 that.

14 I do have, as the senator does,
15 a resolution recognized from the
16 entire Bucks County delegation of the
17 House of Representatives, because I
18 think everyone -- Democrat,
19 Republican -- in Bucks County knows
20 how hard you've worked for the last 29
21 years representing this Authority, and
22 it's not every day that I, in this new
23 role, get to recognize somebody that's
24 been working and volunteering and

1 serving their community for almost as
2 long as I've been alive.

3 That is very impactful, very
4 meaningful when we get to do that,
5 because we have a shortage of that in
6 our society right now, people that are
7 dedicated to giving back.

8 And I was thinking of some
9 things, I was thinking of some of my
10 friends, and there's probably one
11 person that I think should be here but
12 he can't be, and that's my former
13 boss, my friend, and I think yours as
14 well, Pat, our former congressman,
15 Mike Fitzpatrick.

16 And correct me if I'm wrong,
17 but I think Mike may have appointed
18 you to SEPTA when he was a Bucks
19 County commissioner.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: He did.

21 REPRESENTATIVE HOGAN: So I was
22 actually fortunate enough to be gifted
23 some of his collectible pins and
24 things he had as a member of Congress,

1 and I'm actually wearing one of his
2 now from 2012 when SEPTA was
3 recognized as the transportation
4 agency of the year throughout the
5 United States. So I think a little
6 bit of him is with us today.

7 But I want to congratulate you,
8 and I'm also not going to read the
9 citation. You'll have plenty of time
10 in retirement to do that. So I would
11 like to come up as well and present it
12 to you. So thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank
15 you, Representative Hogan.

16 Under Chairman Deon's
17 leadership, SEPTA has formed strong
18 and productive partnerships with each
19 county, not just Bucks County, and
20 also the City of Philadelphia. And we
21 are pleased to be joined here today by
22 Philadelphia City Councilman Mike
23 Driscoll, who is also the new chair of
24 the Committee on Transportation and

1 Public Utilities.

2 Councilman Driscoll.

3 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank
4 you, Ken.

5 So I've never had the honor of
6 having the chairman as my constituent,
7 being from Northeast Philadelphia, but
8 I wouldn't -- if he was my
9 constituent, I wouldn't say he was
10 high maintenance. I would have said
11 he was high impact, high energy, and
12 high deliverable.

13 Because I did have the pleasure
14 of working with you in my capacity in
15 the House of Representatives, only a
16 short time in my role here in the City
17 of Philadelphia, but I also did so
18 with admiration and respect.

19 I was a beneficiary of SEPTA's
20 hard work. I had a business here in
21 the City of Philadelphia, Finnigan's
22 Wake Bar and Catering Hall, and we
23 hosted the 2000 Republican National
24 Convention. And a lot of the way the

1 people were getting around then was
2 SEPTA.

3 We also benefited from the
4 papal visit. We were closed or sold
5 by the time of the 2016 -- '16, yes --
6 Democratic National Convention, but
7 all those things were through your
8 leadership.

9 And I know that you've set
10 SEPTA on the right course. 2026 is
11 gonna be a big year for the City of
12 Philadelphia in our
13 Semiquincentennial, and SEPTA is going
14 to play a big role.

15 I know things are going to go
16 in the right direction here. We're
17 very proud of you. And I, too, have a
18 citation on behalf of the entire city
19 council and our new Council President
20 Johnson, and I will also not read this
21 because I know you like to get through
22 these meetings quickly.

23 So congratulations. We're
24 proud of you.

1 (Applause.)

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank
4 you, Councilman Driscoll.

5 Next, I'd like to invite our
6 police chief, Chief Charles Lawson, to
7 the podium for a presentation. He's
8 already there because he's always
9 ready.

10 CHIEF LAWSON: Appreciate that,
11 Ken.

12 Mr. Chairman I did not want to
13 let this opportunity pass without
14 formally thanking you for your
15 leadership and your support of the
16 transit police department over these
17 many years.

18 I'm convinced that without it,
19 we would not enjoy the professional
20 reputation that we do today. Whether
21 it was increasing officer safety by
22 equipping all police officers with
23 tasers, or helping us to be a national
24 leader in police transparency through

1 the early adoption of body-worn camera
2 system, or perhaps when we faced our
3 greatest threat, a staffing challenge
4 like we have never experienced before,
5 you were at the forefront helping to
6 increase pay for police officers,
7 letting us to become instantly
8 competitive, and closing a seventy
9 officer deficit in less than two
10 years.

11 And so, Mr. Chairman, on behalf
12 of a very grateful group of law
13 enforcement professionals, I want to
14 present you with our police department
15 accommodation for distinguished
16 lifetime service. I thank you for
17 everything you've done for us, sir.

18 (Applause.)

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: You
21 doing okay? We have more.

22 I'm sure everyone here on the
23 Board has a Pat Deon story that they
24 could share. We've got a couple in

1 the back. We're not going to do that
2 out here in front of the public, but
3 we are going to have two Board members
4 speak on behalf of all of us, and
5 first up is going to be Board Member
6 Bill Leonard.

7 MR. LEONARD: Thank you, Vice
8 Chairman Lawrence.

9 Senator Farry, Representative
10 Hogan, and Councilman Driscoll each
11 captured how Chairman Deon has
12 leveraged political and personal
13 relationships to secure legislative
14 victories for SEPTA and strengthen the
15 Authority's reputation across
16 Pennsylvania.

17 Chairman Deon has been equally
18 effective working at the federal
19 level, and to help mark this special
20 occasion, two of SEPTA's strongest
21 champions in Washington, Congressman
22 Brian Fitzpatrick and Congressman and
23 former SEPTA Board Member Dwight
24 Evans, jointly entered formal remarks

1 into the congressional record
2 recognizing Chairman Deon for his
3 nearly three decades of dedicated
4 service to Southeastern Pennsylvania
5 and the entire Commonwealth.

6 Congressman Fitzpatrick also
7 arranged to have this flag, US flag,
8 flown over the Capital in honor of
9 his -- of your contributions to SEPTA
10 and our region.

11 Mr. Chairman, the rule today is
12 that we're not allowed to read these
13 documents --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

15 MR. LEONARD: -- to save time,
16 but they're fitting and lasting
17 tributes to all you have done for this
18 Authority and the customers we serve.
19 I'm honored to present them to you
20 now.

21 (Applause.)

22 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank
23 you, Bill.

24 Next up, I believe that Tom

1 Ellis is probably the longest tenured
2 Board member after Chairman Deon, so
3 you'll become the longest after this
4 but still the shortest. So we're
5 going to ask you to make a few remarks
6 for the Board for Chairman Deon.

7 MR. ELLIS: Thank you, Ken.
8 Can everybody see me above
9 this?

10 I thought with Pat gone, I
11 wouldn't get these jokes.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: I just
13 wanted you to know it wasn't gonna
14 end.

15 MR. ELLIS: As the longest
16 serving member of the Board next to
17 Pat, I wanted to take this
18 opportunity, before making the
19 presentation on behalf of the Board
20 and all SEPTA employees, to make a few
21 comments about Pat, who is the reason
22 I actually returned to the Board after
23 a short hiatus.

24 When Pat took over the Board as

1 chairman 24 years ago, the meetings
2 would go well into the evening. Even
3 with Leslie's report, we rarely go
4 past 3:30, except for today I think
5 we're going to go way past.

6 The general manager at the time
7 ignored the Board. The then general
8 counsel hid things from the Board.
9 The city representatives fought the
10 suburban representatives, and the
11 democrats on the Board fought the
12 republicans.

13 But Pat put a stop to all of
14 that. It wasn't easy and it wasn't
15 overnight, and it certainly took a
16 tremendous amount of a work.

17 Pat's known to be politically
18 incorrect at times, but that's truly
19 an act to cover for the most
20 politically correct person I've ever
21 dealt with. Pat is a man who treats
22 everybody with respect and with a
23 tinge of humor and a smile on his
24 face, from those working in this

1 building to those driving buses on the
2 front lines, from our terrific police
3 officers to most of all our SEPTA
4 riders.

5 Pat's concern has always been
6 the SEPTA riders, especially those who
7 have no other means of transportation
8 to get to their jobs to keep our
9 economy growing. Safe, clean, on-time
10 transportation has always been Pat's
11 mantra.

12 Pat was always able to cut
13 through the clutter and come back to
14 this Board's sole purpose, to provide
15 safe, clean, on-time service to all of
16 our riders.

17 For Pat's 24 years as chair,
18 his work to unite the Board -- and
19 rarely are votes close, or for that
20 matter, not unanimous. As Pat works
21 behind the scenes to address each
22 Board member's concerns, withdrawing
23 items until those concerns are met.

24 And each February for 24 years

1 when Pat would run for chair, even
2 though he know he had the votes, he
3 would call not only each Board member,
4 but their appointing Authority
5 requesting their support once again.
6 That's the definition of humility.

7 But the real definition of Pat
8 Deon is mensch, a term many of you in
9 the room understand, but if you don't,
10 you can come see me later.

11 That's the highest compliment
12 someone in his position can get. He's
13 put his blood, sweat, and tears into
14 improving SEPTA and the lives of its
15 riders. He will be sorely missed, but
16 his insights will always be welcome.

17 And now for the presentation.

18 Pat, on behalf of the Board and
19 all of our SEPTA employees here and on
20 the front lines, we present you with
21 this commemorative bowl, which is not
22 for your cigar ashes.

23 And, Carlene, I would ask to
24 make sure he does not put his ashes in

1 here. And, Carlene, thank you for
2 sharing him with us all these years.

3 So, Pat, I'm going to give you
4 this bowl because they said if I broke
5 it, I bought it.

6 (Applause.)

7 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Now
8 I'd like us all to recognize Pat's
9 family. As you've heard, this has
10 been nearly 30 years of service.

11 You've all heard how much time
12 Pat has dedicated to this, so we want
13 to thank and acknowledge his family;
14 his wife, of course, Carlene, P.T. and
15 Justine and Chloe and Ashley. We want
16 to thank you all for sharing him with
17 us for all these years, but we want
18 you to know that he talks about you
19 all the time in between berating us
20 and insulting us and more things.
21 That's always the most pleasant part
22 of it.

23 So I'd like everyone to stand
24 and honor the Deon family.

1 (Applause.)

2 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: All
3 right, Pat. We're almost there.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: We got ten
5 minutes left and we're going to the
6 regular meeting.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: We're
8 almost there. We have a whole nother
9 meeting after this. We have a lot of
10 public speakers.

11 Your legacy extends to every
12 part of this Authority and every
13 corner of our service territory. One
14 of the major milestones during your
15 chairmanship has been rebuilding the
16 system and replacing aging vehicles,
17 and we could not think of a more
18 fitting tribute than to name a vehicle
19 in your honor.

20 So I'm pleased to announce that
21 the SEPTA Locomotive 901 will forever
22 bear your name as it crisscrosses our
23 region. May it always run on time.

24 (Applause.)

1 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE:

2 Anything you'd like to say?

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

4 Is that it?

5 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: For
6 now.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'll try
8 to be brief and thorough, and I hope
9 you don't mind if I read what is
10 written down so that I don't miss
11 anything.

12 I'm here before you, surrounded
13 by my colleagues and friends and
14 family, so very humbled that you've
15 considered my retirement ceremony
16 worthy of your time today.

17 I am thankful to be honored
18 with the citations, flags, this
19 wonderful bowl, and a new locomotive
20 with my name on it. This is much,
21 much more than I could ever have hoped
22 for or expected. And that is exactly
23 how I feel about my 29 years here at
24 SEPTA.

1 I had no idea what I was
2 getting into when I was appointed to
3 this Board, and I had less of a clue
4 when I became chairman.

5 On day one, we had a strike.
6 Then later, I was informed of an
7 ongoing FBI investigation. And more
8 recently, we've persevered through a
9 once-in-a-century pandemic. I do not
10 have much hair, but whatever I had
11 back then was absolutely on fire from
12 the start.

13 But this agency is not what it
14 was 29 years ago, and frankly, neither
15 am I. The friendships that I have
16 made here, the partnerships and
17 relationships that we have forged
18 across the political aisle, across the
19 region and this state are just
20 invaluable, and they mean the world to
21 me.

22 And that is really where I want
23 to begin my remarks, by thanking all
24 of you, starting with my family.

1 Thank you for lending me to SEPTA
2 without restrictions. I know that
3 this role consumed a lot of my time,
4 especially on every Thursday and with
5 the phone calls at all hours of the
6 day and night. I appreciate your
7 patience through all the years, so
8 thank you.

9 I'd like to acknowledge a few
10 very rare individuals who have been by
11 my side for 29 years, my valued Board
12 staff; Controllers Steve Jobs and
13 Robert Marron, Government and Board
14 Liaison Fran Kelly, and Board
15 Secretary Carol Looby.

16 Fran, thank you for our
17 friendship and your above-and-beyond
18 tireless support outside of your
19 normal job descriptions.

20 Where is he? Fran, thank you.

21 Carol, from the beginning,
22 you've been loyal, the Board's eyes
23 and ears. You've helped everyone make
24 the magic happen here at SEPTA. I

1 appreciate you. I appreciate
2 everything you've done for me over the
3 years, so thank you.

4 To my friends on the Board, our
5 current members present today and
6 those from over the many years, the
7 management and employees here at
8 SEPTA, our friends in the state
9 legislature, Washington, D.C.,
10 Philadelphia, across this region,
11 thank you for your talent and
12 commitment and for being here today.

13 I would also like to thank
14 Chief Lawson and the SEPTA Transit
15 Police and all our local police. We
16 at SEPTA unconditionally support you
17 and thank you for everything you've
18 done for us over the years.

19 I'm not one for long speeches,
20 but I'd like to take just a few
21 minutes of time to look at where we
22 started, what we have accomplished,
23 and some challenges that are ahead of
24 us.

1 Again, this agency is not what
2 it is today without the hard work and
3 dedication of our Board members, who
4 volunteer their time, energy, and
5 efforts to this organization.

6 We represent different
7 communities on this Board, and we come
8 from different political parties. We
9 work together as a team through
10 difficult decisions for SEPTA's
11 future.

12 Thank all of you. It's been a
13 great honor to work with all of you.

14 I have worked alongside six
15 governors of both parties, five
16 Philadelphia mayors, and countless
17 commissioners and councilmembers
18 across the region.

19 Some of the most important
20 changes we have made here occurred
21 while working with divided government
22 in Harrisburg. And that's because
23 when we came here to this room to do
24 this job, we always, always put this

1 agency, our employees, and our riders
2 above all else. The best customer
3 experience, period. And in the
4 process, as a team, we transformed
5 SEPTA.

6 We started by tightening up our
7 finances, and I am very proud of the
8 fact that we just marked 22 straight
9 years of balanced budgets. Our \$2
10 billion annual budget includes capital
11 dollars so that we can make real,
12 long-lasting improvements to the
13 system. We had to get creative, and
14 we had to beat down doors in D.C. and
15 Harrisburg.

16 This might shock some of you,
17 but people did not just show up one
18 day offering us cash money to rehab
19 subway stations or restore train
20 service. We took advantage of a
21 federal program designed to encourage
22 investment in public infrastructure.

23 Yes, the EB-5 program was
24 controversial, but we were focused on

1 improving this system. We had to
2 pursue all options. That program
3 spurred \$400 million in critical
4 infrastructure projects across the
5 system.

6 We did rehab on subway
7 stations. We restored service on the
8 Media/Elwyn Line and purchased new
9 locomotives. Our new electronic fare
10 collection system does not happen
11 without this funding.

12 We sold station naming rights
13 and advertising opportunities. The
14 Jefferson Station, NRG Station, Wawa
15 Station, Penn Medicine Station, and
16 Drexel University Station; all these
17 have helped fund long-lasting and
18 significant investments.

19 We made investments in every
20 part of this system with new buses,
21 restored and improved rail lines,
22 Market-Frankford El, and stations on
23 the Broad Street Line.

24 And what has that funding meant

1 to the City of Philadelphia and the
2 region? To name a few, national
3 conventions, papal visits, and parades
4 for our sports team champions.

5 Look ahead to 2026 when this
6 region will host the FIFA World Cup,
7 the Major League Baseball All-Star
8 Game, and PGA Championship. 2026 also
9 marks the 250th anniversary of this
10 nation's founding, and this region
11 will be at the center of that national
12 celebration.

13 These events drive money into
14 our economy. They put us in the
15 national and international spotlight.
16 People come here and they want to come
17 back, or they come back here and
18 decide to stay.

19 Today, SEPTA is a vital part --
20 I would argue the vital part -- of
21 this region's economy and growth.
22 SEPTA is the glue, the backbone, the
23 engine of that growth. We all know
24 that this region would not be and

1 could not be the economic powerhouse
2 it is without SEPTA.

3 SEPTA today is not an
4 afterthought when businesses look to
5 invest here and create jobs. We are
6 sitting at the table and working to
7 attract new businesses and employers.
8 There is a lot to be proud of here.

9 These accomplishments and
10 transformation were critical in our
11 work in Harrisburg to create a
12 dedicated funding source for transit
13 across the entire Commonwealth.

14 Everyone here understands what
15 Acts 44 and 89 meant to our region and
16 to our transit systems across the
17 state. The dollars that have been
18 invested will deliver returns for
19 decades.

20 My relationships in Harrisburg
21 that led to these measures changed the
22 entire discussion about transit across
23 the state. Transit is not viewed as
24 an expense, but as an investment.

1 But Acts 44 and 89 have run
2 their course, so SEPTA needs to crank
3 up their work to make sure that the
4 current lawmakers and governor enact
5 sustainable, long-term funding for
6 transit, or we risk falling back. We
7 have set a great record here and are
8 hopeful this record will continue.

9 I want to close by making sure
10 everyone here understands what our
11 commitment to "best customer
12 experience" means. It is about our
13 ridership; the people who rely on
14 SEPTA every day.

15 The national and international
16 events are wonderful and make for
17 great copy, but since the time I
18 started through this SEPTA journey, I
19 and we have always put our riders
20 first.

21 Finally, working alongside all
22 of you has been wonderful, and I will
23 always hold dearly the memories and
24 friendships made here at SEPTA. I

1 wish you all the best of luck and
2 continued success.

3 Thank you, again, for all your
4 support and this wonderful ceremony.

5 Again, just as a side note,
6 it's been great being here. It's been
7 great working through all these
8 projects. It's been, I would say, one
9 of the greatest things in my life,
10 other than my family, and I do
11 appreciate all your support over the
12 years and the great staff and the
13 employees we have here at SEPTA.

14 So thank you again, and we'll
15 move to adjourn.

16 (Applause.)

17 VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: I'd
18 like to make a motion to adjourn this
19 meeting.

20 MR. ELLIS: Second.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor,
22 say "aye."

23 ALL: Aye.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: We're adjourned.

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(Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.)
- - -

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 I do hereby certify that I am a Notary
3 Public in good standing; that the aforesaid
4 testimony was taken before me, pursuant to
5 notice, at the time and place indicated; that
6 the testimony was correctly recorded in
7 machine shorthand by me and thereafter
8 transcribed under my supervision with
9 computer-aided transcription; and that the
10 transcript is a true and correct record of the
11 testimony.

12

13 WITNESS my hand and official seal this
14 10th day of February, 2023.

15

Kaitlyn Muchnick

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Kaitlyn Muchnick,

Notary Public

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