

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
OF  
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
JANUARY 25, 2024**

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The Special Meeting of the Board of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority was held on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 3:00 PM with the Chairman in the Chair.

**Present**

Attending the meeting and present in the Board Room were the following Board Members:

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

Attending the meeting via WebEx were the following Board Members:

John F. Cordisco, Esquire  
Scott C. Freda

Present in the Board Room were the following Staff Members:

Leslie S. Richards - General Manager/Chief Executive Officer  
Gino Benedetti, Esquire - General Counsel  
Carol R. Looby - Secretary to the Board  
Francis E. Kelly - Board & Government Liaison  
Stephanie Deiger - Chief Human Resources Officer  
Jody Holton - Chief Officer, Strategy & Planning  
Scott A. Sauer - Chief Officer, Operations  
William Webster - Chief Officer, Communications  
Martha R. Behan - Deputy Chief Financial Officer  
Susan Sanderson - Manager, Labor Relations

Attending the meeting via WebEx was the following Staff Member:

Nick Grieshaber, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

Chairman Deon called the Special Meeting of the Board to order and conducted a roll call of the Board.

The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

Chairman Deon then thanked everyone for joining in the Board Meeting. He announced that the Board had met in Executive Session just prior to the meeting to discuss legal matters. He stated that all written comments and voicemail messages that have been received would be included in the official Special Board Meeting transcript, which would then be posted to the SEPTA website. (There were no voice mail messages received.) The Chair stated that if there were speakers who wished to address the agenda item, they would be called on before the Board voted on the item and had asked that they limit their remarks to two minutes. Sue Sanderson then presented the following Resolution:

**"Memorandum of Agreement By and Between SEPTA and the International Brotherhood of Teamster (IBT) Local 500"**

In response to Chairman Deon, Secretary Looby stated that there were no speakers on the agenda item. He then entertained a Motion to Adopt the Resolution. Vice Chairman Lawrence moved, Mr. Ellis seconded, and the Resolution was unanimously adopted.

Chairman Deon commented that we were starting off 2024 much like how we ended last year - facing a major funding challenge. He shared that efforts have been continuing with our funding partners in Harrisburg to find a solution. There were a number of great efforts to improve service for our customers, underway, and we want to ensure funding is there to support those initiatives. For example, he announced that the Board would vote today on a plan to redesign the bus network so that customers have more reliable and efficient service. With full funding support, much more is possible.

As many of you may know, the Chair announced that it was his last meeting as the Chairman of the SEPTA Board. He said it has been his honor to serve in this role. There would be more to say about this later, but he said he had wanted to say how grateful he was to everyone here at SEPTA. Chairman Deon said he knows we have great new leadership ready to step up on the SEPTA Board, and he wishes everyone all the best.

Vice Chair Lawrence was then recognized and said that it was appropriate that as Mr. Deon's last meeting it would probably be the longest meeting of his 25-year tenure. Mr. Lawrence announced that after 29 years as a member of the Board and the last 25 years

as Chairman, this was Chairman Deon's final Board meeting. We did not want to let this moment pass without taking the opportunity to say thank you for his years of service and to congratulate him as he concludes nearly 30 years of service on the Board. Vice Chair Lawrence continued and said to put that in perspective, SEPTA marked its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and for over half of that time Chairman Deon was in a leadership position. He added that SEPTA and the region were better from Mr. Deon's service and that he should take pride in knowing that he leaves SEPTA strong enough to weather the significant challenges ahead and nimble enough to seize new opportunities.

On a personal note, Vice Chair Lawrence said that he and Chair Deon have worked together very closely for the last 11 or 12 years and mentioned that they enjoy both beer and cigars and love their families. He said Mr. Deon has taught him a lot about SEPTA, about leadership and he would like to say personally that it has been his privilege to be able to be alongside him during this time.

The Vice Chair continued and announced that there were many who were present at the meeting to celebrate Chairman Deon's legacy and the mark that he would leave on the transit agency and the region it serves. He then introduced SEPTA's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager, Leslie Richards.

Ms. Richards began by saying that there were a lot of people who want to say thank you because there was a lot of thanks here. She addressed Chairman Deon and said personally she would say thank you to him, as well as speaking for the over 9,000 employees. She said we were very grateful for Chairman Deon's 24 years of service to SEPTA as the Chairman of the Board. For many of us, he was the only Chairman that we ever known, and during that extraordinary tenure, Chairman Deon put SEPTA on a sounder financial footing than it was in 1999 when he joined the Board.

Continuing, Ms. Richards said SEPTA has benefitted greatly from the Chair's relationships and political skills. She said she was honored that she got to see many of them close-up and to see how he does his little magic that he does, not quite sure how to categorize it, but Mr. Deon knows how to work both sides of the aisle, and that he is masterful, skillful in brokering deals to stabilize state funding for public transit. Ms. Richards said he has always been a voice for us.

Ms. Richards stated that there were so many other people who also would like to lend their congratulations. She thanked Chairman Deon and congratulated him on the extremely well-deserved retirement.

Chairman Deon thanked Ms. Richards.

Vice Chairman Lawrence said it was his pleasure to introduce a good friend of the Chairman and a good friend of his, his hometown senator, Senator Frank Farry, who he said has been a long-time supporter of SEPTA and has worked to pass Act 89 in 2013 when he was a member of the House. He then thanked Senator Farry for being present at the meeting.

Senator Farry began by saying that he is a long-time friend of the Chairman and his family. He mentioned that he served as Mr. Deon's volunteer fire chief in addition to having spent 14 years as his State Representative, and now his State Senator. He also mentioned that Mr. Deon was his most high-maintenance constituent, but he says that in admiration, because that high maintenance was based on his efforts and his advocacy in large part for SEPTA and for the community.

The Senator said Mr. Deon was always to the point and you would always know what his efforts were and that they were very strong, saying that SEPTA would not be where it was today, without Mr. Deon's efforts. He then wished Mr. Deon the best of luck.

Senator Farry shared that there were some challenges with Act 89 and some of the other advocacy efforts that they had in Harrisburg, but he said they fought hard to get that done and Mr. Deon led the way in a lot of that and he deserves the recognition for it.

Senator Farry concluded by announcing that he had a Senate Citation and said Chairman Deon was being recognized by the State Senate for his tenure at SEPTA and said that there was a state flag dedicated to the Chairman.

Vice Chairman Lawrence then introduced Mr. Deon's state representative, Joe Hogan, who has a presentation on behalf of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Representative Hogan said he echoes much of what Senator Farry said. He said he only represented Mr. Deon for one year and that he has a Resolution recognizing him on behalf of the entire Bucks County delegation of the House of Representatives because everyone, Democrat and Republican in Bucks County knows how hard Chairman Deon worked for the last 29 years representing the Authority.

Representative Hogan continued and said that there was someone who was not present today, the former Congressman Mike

Fitzpatrick, who he believes may have appointed the Chairman to the SEPTA Board, with Mr. Deon replying yes, he did. The Representative mentioned that he was gifted with the former Congressman's collectible pins that he received as a member of Congress, and one that he was wearing today from 2012 when SEPTA was recognized as the transportation agency of the year throughout the United States, and this was a little bit of Congressman Fitzpatrick present with us today.

Representative Hogan then presented Chairman Deon a Citation.

Under Chairman Deon's leadership, Vice Chairman Lawrence commented that SEPTA has formed strong and productive partnerships with each county, not just Bucks County, including the City of Philadelphia. He then introduced Philadelphia City Councilman Mike Driscoll, who he said was also the new Chair of the Committee of Transportation and Public Utilities.

Councilman Driscoll said he never had the honor of having Mr. Deon as his constituent, being from Northeast Philadelphia. He said Mr. Deon was high impact, high energy, and high deliverable. He mentioned that he did have the pleasure of working with Chairman Deon in his capacity in the House of Representatives, and only a short time in his role as City Councilman, but he also did so with admiration and respect.

The Councilman shared that he was a beneficiary of SEPTA's hard work, having had a business in the City of Philadelphia, Finnigan's Wake Bar and Catering Hall, where they had hosted the 2000 Republican National Convention, where attendees traveled around on SEPTA. Councilman Driscoll said they also benefitted from the Papal visit, and both were through Chairman Deon's leadership. He mentioned that 2026 would be a big year for the City of Philadelphia in its Semiquincentennial, and SEPTA would play a big role.

Councilman Driscoll closed by saying that we were very proud of Chairman Deon and that he, too, has a Citation on behalf of the entire City Council and its new Council President Johnson.

Vice Chairman Lawrence thanked Councilman Driscoll and then introduced SEPTA's Police Chief, Chuck Lawson. Chief Lawson told Chairman Deon that he did not want to let the opportunity pass without formally thanking him for his leadership and his support of the Transit Police Department over the many years. He said he was convinced that without it, we would not enjoy the professional reputation that they have today. Whether it was increasing officer safety by equipping all police officers with tasers or helping

them to be a national leader in police transparency through the early adoption of body-worn camera system, or perhaps when they faced their greatest threat, a staffing challenge like they have never experienced before. Chief Lawson said Chairman Deon was at the forefront helping to increase pay for police officers, letting them to become instantly competitive, and closing a seventy-officer deficit in less than two years.

On behalf of a very grateful group of law enforcement Professionals, Chief Lawson presented Chairman Deon with a Police Department Accommodation for Distinguished Lifetime Service.

Vice Chair Lawrence said that the Board would have two Board Members speak on their behalf, beginning with Board Member Bill Leonard.

Board Member Leonard began by saying Senator Farry, Representative Hogan, and Councilman Driscoll each captured how Chairman Deon leveraged political and personal relationships to secure legislative victories for SEPTA and strengthened the Authority's reputation across Pennsylvania.

Mr. Leonard added that Chairman Deon was equally effective working at the federal level, and to help mark this special occasion, two of SEPTA's strongest champions in Washington, Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick and Congressman and Former SEPTA Board Member, Dwight Evans, jointly entered formal remarks into the congressional record recognizing Chairman Deon for his nearly three decades of dedicated service to Southeastern Pennsylvania and the entire Commonwealth. Mr. Leonard added that Congressman Fitzpatrick also arranged to have a U.S. flag flown over the Capital in honor of Mr. Deon's contributions to SEPTA and to our region.

The Vice Chairman said Mr. Ellis, the longest tenured Board Member after the Chairman would provide the following remarks:

"As the longest-serving member of this Board next to Pat, I wanted to take this opportunity, before making the presentation, to make a few comments about Pat, who is the reason I returned to this Board after a small hiatus.

When Pat took over this Board as Chairman 24 years ago, the meetings would go well into the evening (even with Leslie's report, we rarely go past 3:30), the then General Manager ignored the Board, the then General Counsel hid things from the Board, the City representatives fought the suburban representatives, and the Democrats on the Board fought the Republicans.

Pat put a stop to all that. But it wasn't easy, and it certainly wasn't overnight.

Pat is known to be "politically incorrect" at times but that is truly an act, a cover for the most politically correct person I've ever dealt with. Pat is a man who treats everyone with respect (with a tinge of humor and a smile on his face), from those working in this building to those driving buses on the frontlines, from our terrific police officers to most of all, our SEPTA riders. Pat's concern has always been the SEPTA riders, especially those who have no other means of transportation to get to their jobs to keep our economy growing - safe, clean, on-time transportation has always been Pat's mantra. Pat was always able to cut through the clutter and come back to this Board's sole purpose - to provide safe, clean, on-time service for our riders.

For Pat's 24 years as Chair, he has worked to unite the Board and rarely are votes close or for even that matter, not unanimous, as Pat works behind-the-scenes to address each Board Member's concerns, withdrawing items until those concerns are met.

And each February for 24 years, when Pat would run for Chair, even though he knew he had the votes, he would call not only each Board Member but their appointing authority requesting their support. The definition of "humility".

But the real definition of Pat Deon is "mensch", a term many of you in this room understand and the highest compliment someone in his position can receive. He has put his blood, sweat and tears into improving SEPTA and the lives of its riders. He will be sorely missed but his insights will always be welcome. And now for the presentation!

Pat, on behalf of the SEPTA Board, the SEPTA employees here and on the front lines and most of all, the SEPTA ridership, we present you with this commemorative bowl, which is not for your cigar ashes!"

Mr. Ellis concluded his remarks with presenting Mr. Deon with a crystal bowl on behalf of the Board.

Vice Chairman Lawrence then recognized and acknowledged Chairman Deon's family, his wife, Carlene, P.T. and Justine and Chloe and Ashley. He thanked them for sharing Mr. Deon with us for all the years but wanted them to know that he talks about them all the time. He then requested everyone to stand to honor the Deon family and there was a round of applause.

Mr. Lawrence mentioned that the Regular Board Meeting would follow with a list of public speakers. He told Mr. Deon that his legacy extends to every part of the Authority and every corner of its service territory. He said one of the major milestones during his Chairmanship was rebuilding the system and replacing aging vehicles. Vice Chairman Lawrence said that we could not think of a more fitting tribute than to name of vehicle in the Mr. Deon's name. He said he was pleased to announce that SEPTA Locomotive 901 would forever bear his name as it crisscrosses the region.

Chairman Deon said he would try to be brief and thorough, and that he would read from what he wrote so that he did not miss anything:

"Well, I'll try to be brief & thorough, and I hope you don't mind if I read what is written down so that I don't miss anything. I am here before you, surrounded by my colleagues & friends & family, so very humbled that you have considered my retirement ceremony worthy of your time today. I am thankful to be honored with the citations, flags, this wonderful bowl, and a new locomotive with my name on it. This is much, much more than I could have ever hoped for or expected. And that is exactly how I feel about my 29 years here at SEPTA.

I really had no idea what I was getting into when I was appointed to this Board. And I had even less of a clue when I became Chairman.

On day one, we had a strike, then later I was informed of an on-going FBI investigation, & more recently, we preserved through a once-in-a-century pandemic.

I do not have much hair left but whatever I had back then was absolutely on fire from the start.

But this agency is not what it was 29 years ago, and frankly, neither am I. The friendships that I have made here; the partnerships & relationships that we have forged across the political aisle, across the region and this state are just invaluable . . . . They mean the world to me.

And that is really where I want to begin my remarks - by thanking all of you - starting with my family. Thank you for lending me to SEPTA without restrictions. I know that this role consumed a lot of my time - especially on every Thursday & with the phone calls at all hours of the day & night and I appreciate your patience throughout the years.

I'd like to acknowledge a few very rare individuals who have been by my side for 29 years, my valued Board Staff - Controllers Steve Jobs & Rob Marron, Government & Board Liaison Fran Kelly & Board Secretary Carol Looby. Fran, thank you for our friendship and your ABOVE & BEYOND tireless support outside your normal job descriptions.

Carol, from the beginning, you have been loyal, the Board's eyes and ears, and you've helped everyone make the magic happen here at SEPTA. I APPRECIATE YOU.

To my friends on the Board, our current members present today and those from over the many years, the management & employees here at SEPTA, our friends in the State Legislature, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, across this region, thank you for your talent and commitment & for being here today.

I also would like to thank Chief Lawson & the SEPTA Transit Police, and all our local police . . . We at SEPTA unconditionally support you.

I am not one for long speeches, but I would like to take just a few minutes of your time to look at where we started, what we have accomplished, and some challenges that are ahead of us.

Again, this agency is not what it is today without the hard work & dedication of our Board Members WHO volunteer their time, energy & efforts to this organization. We represent different communities on this Board, and we come from different political parties. We work together as a team through difficult decisions for SEPTA's future. Thank you All.

I have worked alongside 6 Governors of both parties, 5 Philadelphia Mayors and countless Commissioners and Councilmembers across the region.

Some of the most important changes we have made here occurred while working with divided government in Harrisburg.

And that is because, when we came here to this room to do this job, we ALWAYS, ALWAYS put this agency, our employees, and our riders above all else - The Best Customer Experience - PERIOD. And in the process, we as a team transformed SEPTA.

We started by tightening up our finances and I am very proud of the fact that we just marked 22 straight years of balanced budgets.

Our 2 billion dollars annual budget includes capital dollars - so that we can make real, lasting improvements to this system. We had to get creative, and we had to beat down doors in D.C. and Harrisburg.

This might shock some of you, but people did not just show up one day offering us cash money to rehab subway stations or restore train service.

We took advantage of a federal program designed to encourage investment in public infrastructure. Yes, the EB-5 program was controversial, but we were focused on improving this system - we had to pursue all options. That program spurred 400 million dollars in critical infrastructure projects across the system.

We did rehab on subway stations, we restored service on the Media/Elwyn Line and purchased new locomotives.

Our new electronic fare collection system does not happen without this funding.

We sold station naming rights and advertising opportunities. The Jefferson Station, NRG Station, Wawa Station, Penn Medicine Station, and Drexel University Station - all of these have helped fund long-lasting and significant investments.

We have made investments in every part of this system with new buses, restored and improved rail lines, Market Frankford El and stations on the Broad Street Line. And what has that funding meant to the City of Philadelphia and the region? To name a few, National Conventions, Papal visits, & Parades for our Sports Team Champions. Look ahead to 2026 when this region will host the FIFA World Cup, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game, and the PGA Championship.

2026 also marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this nation's founding and this region will be at the center of that national celebration.

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

Today, SEPTA is a vital part - I WOULD ARGUE THE VITAL PART - of this region's economy and growth. SEPTA is the glue, the backbone, the engine of that growth. We all know that this region WOULD NOT BE & COULD NOT BE the economic powerhouse it is without SEPTA.

SEPTA today is not an afterthought when businesses look to invest here and create jobs. We are sitting at the table and working to attract new businesses and employers. There is a lot to be proud of here . . . These accomplishments and this transformation were critical in our work in Harrisburg to create a dedicated funding source for transit across the entire Commonwealth.

Everyone here understands what ACTS 44 and 89 meant to our region and to transit systems across the state. The dollars that have been invested will deliver returns for decades.

My relationships in Harrisburg that led to these measures changed the entire discussion about transit across the state . . . Transit is NOT viewed as an expense but as an investment.

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

I want to close by making sure everyone here understands what our commitment to Best Customer Experience means. . . It is about our ridership ---- the people who rely on SEPTA every day.

The national and international events are wonderful and make for great copy, but since the time I started through this SEPTA journey, I and WE have ALWAYS put our riders first.

Finally, working alongside all of you has been wonderful & I will always hold dearly the memories & friendships made here at SEPTA. I wish you all the best of luck & much continued success.

Thank you, again, for your support and for this wonderful ceremony."

As a side note, the Chair said it has been great being here and working through all the projects. He said it was one of the greatest things in his life other than his family, and he appreciates all the support over the years from the great staff and the employees that are at SEPTA.

### Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this Special Meeting, Chairman Deon then entertained a Motion that the meeting be adjourned. Vice Chairman Lawrence moved, seconded

**Minutes of Special Board Meeting**  
**January 25, 2024**

by Mr. Ellis, and unanimously adopted that the meeting be adjourned at 3:30 PM.

A transcript of this meeting was made by an official court reporter and is made a part of the original minutes.

Carol R. Looby  
Secretary to the Board