

NEW JERSEY MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION

Minutes by Board Secretary Chris Hillmann of actions taken at the Open Session of the Regular Board meeting of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) Board via TEAMS and conference call on Thursday, October 14, 2021.

Present:

B. Sue Fulton, Chair and Chief Administrator
Vice Chair, DOT Designee Joe Bertoni
Diane Legreide, Board Member
Steve Scaturro, Board Member
Walter Orcutt, Board Member
Eric Heitmann, AG Designee
Jim Fruscione, Treasury Designee

Governor's Authorities Unit Associate Counsel Joy Johnson participated.

Chair B. Sue Fulton convened the Open Session at 2:00 p.m. in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Agenda Approval. Board Member Diane Legreide moved to accept the proposed agenda, Director Eric Heitmann seconded the motion, and it was unanimously adopted.

Chair Remarks, 10/14/21

We continue to regularly exceed past years' performance. September's average week was an 255,693 total transactions, +14% more than our pre-COVID average. For the last week we have full data for, the last week in September, our total was 277,148 +23% higher than that pre-COVID benchmark.

The difficulties of COVID make it difficult for the public to grasp the transformation we've completed in MVC, for a variety of reasons.

While we've made almost 80% of transactions available online, customers are only doing 55-57% online. The balance are done either by mail or by appointment. We still see people every day at our agencies who could have completed their appointment online.

That said, there is no more than a couple days' wait for any transaction appointment, with two exceptions:

1. **Permits.** There's been an increase in demand due to
 - a. people who had postponed their first license due to COVID;
 - b. expansion of eligibility for driver licenses; and
 - c. 17 year olds who would have gotten permits via their school – which we process in bulk – now making individual appointments.
2. **Knowledge tests.**
 - a. Increase in demand for new licenses; and

b. 40-50% failure rate.

We believe that the demand for permits will resolve in the coming weeks. However, with the high failure rate, the demand for knowledge testing is going to remain high. I'll discuss that in more detail.

For commercial drivers, especially school bus drivers, we work directly with operators and schools to expedite permits and testing. These drivers provide critical services to the community, and we have created a special unit to manage their needs. We've reduced the required number of steps to get that first license, and we arrange for road tests and/or knowledge tests within a day or two.

We are also looking to expand capacity for basic knowledge testing.

On Saturday, September 25, we piloted an offsite basic knowledge test program at Passaic County Community College in Wanaque.

The college graciously provided classroom space with 50 computer stations, and our own IT staff was on hand to facilitate connections. Mobile unit staff and other MVC Agency Ops volunteers provided proctor assistance and the ability to validate permits on site.

We had a hitch in our connectivity when there was an outage in local cellular service. Fortunately, the MVC IT team led by **Project Manager Phil Fink** was able to establish secure linkage in a spare classroom, and the Mobile Unit team members, led by Al Anderson, set up there to do the job.

We were able to serve more than 100 customers, and could have served many more. Unfortunately, we had 30% no-shows. We also saw a 50% failure rate, meaning we have to address those issues to ramp up capacity to meet the need. Look for additional efforts going forward – as we seek to partner with other colleges or state institutions with space and computer capability to support more offsite testing.

Yesterday we were proud to attend the Grand Opening of the new Licensing Center in Elizabeth – after more than a decade, MVC is back in our fourth-largest city. We anticipate completing about 1,000 transactions per week there, alleviating some of the demand.

We have also re-established a **Regional Service Center** in Wayne after a 12-year hiatus. **Coordinator Margarita Jarkowsky** and **Manager of Coordinator and Compliance Unit Greg Focarino** together oversaw operations at the Route 46 facility on opening day, Monday, September 27. A number of our employees, including Margarita and Greg, worked together at the previous Wayne Regional on Route 23 and have now gotten the team back together. The opening of Wayne brings to our total number of Regional Centers, which offer suspension restorations and conferences, to six.

In South Jersey, the new **Road Test Field House** in Cherry Hill is nearing completion. The trailer the road test crew is operating out of now was designed to be “temporary” when it was installed in the 1980s, according to Director of Agency Operations-South Mike Hall, who was giving road tests then. We're happy that we are finally completing this long-delayed upgrade.

We continue to support broader Administration initiatives, such as the latest **Mini Family Festival** in Jersey City on September 30, with our Mobile unit. These events, sponsored by First Lady Tammy Murphy,

provide much-needed support to families in our cities.

And the AAMVA has honored NJMVC again this year – this time with a new record (for us) FOUR! AAMVA 2021 Awards, for work done in CY 2020.

These awards are a product of extraordinary work in 2020.

As always, most of AAMVA's awards are in the PACE (Public Affairs and Consumer Education) area, but I have to note that much of what made these communications successful was the operational change behind it, and the hard work that reflects. In fact, these awards reflect the incredible accomplishments of our entire team over the past year.

Specifically, we won in the following categories.

Our COVID Re-opening Posters, in English and Spanish, outlining our COVID-19 measures, won in the *Creative Signage* category.

We also won in the *Story Placement* category with the nj.com article "MVC Agencies Reopen Next Week: Here's What Drivers Need to Know" by Larry Higgs.

- This article was a product of partnership between our Comms team, Agency Ops, the Bakers Basin Licensing Center, Health & Safety, and Facilities to host a walk-through with Larry Higgs prior to our July re-opening, answering his numerous questions.
- This also reflects well on the tireless work by our team to set re-opening standards ahead of all other customer-facing state agencies.
- Finally, we must note that Mr. Higgs has a long history of covering the MVC, and his knowledge and expertise were key in communicating our many changes to the public.

My "Remarks at Governor's Coronavirus Briefings (Sep, Oct, Nov)" won in the *Speech* category.

- In this case, our IT team were the MVPs for the swift transition of agency services from in-person to online (and the newly-created detailed tracking reports that proved our success).
- Thanks to them and to the day-to-day management of agency crises and timely COVID reporting from Agency Ops, HR, and Security & Investigations, we had a good story to tell at each of these briefings.

Finally, our revamp of the NJMVC.gov website won the category of *Website, Internally produced*.

- We got started with changing our website as we expanded REAL ID, but COVID-19 forced us to super-charge our efforts to keep the website more user-friendly with countless daily changes to keep the site up-to-date, accurate and easy to use.

This is terrific recognition for our 2020 accomplishments, and I'm so proud of our team.

We're facing our next major challenge as we begin implementing the vaccination-or-testing mandate, and I have to call out Director Dana Foraker and her HR team for incredible work throughout COVID-19, managing a record number of retirements, resignations, new hires, leaves and accommodations, and the

massive job of tracking COVID-19 cases and the necessary responses. We've been very fortunate to have Dana in charge of unprecedented challenges the past few years.

And let me broaden that statement. I remain convinced that we here at NJMVC have the best team in state government. We've weathered unprecedented challenges like COVID, delivered on huge initiatives like REAL ID and status-neutral licensing, and still managed to completely transform the IT infrastructure and customer service systems in this agency.

And throughout those challenges, our undisputed MVP is Deputy Chief Angela LaBelle. Essentially performing three jobs – Deputy, Chief of Staff, and head of Finance & Administration – she keeps the whole enterprise running, with stellar judgment, skilled leadership, and good humor, and we owe her an incredible debt of gratitude.

So, with those acknowledgements, let's move to our action items.

Minutes: June 10, 2021. This item is to fulfill the requirements of The Motor Vehicle Security and Customer Service Act and of the Bylaws to approve the Minutes of each MVC Board Meeting, by approving the Minutes of the MVC Board Meeting of June 25, 2021.

Designee Heitmann moved the resolution, Board Member Diane Legreide seconded it.

2110-01 Final Adoption -Motor Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program

This is a Final Adoption. The Commission proposes these amendments and new rules to allow for inspections and re-inspections to take place at an official inspection facility or licensed private inspection facility. This will also further delineate the inspection processes and specifications used at both types of facilities.

Kristen Miller, Legal and Regulatory Affairs Unit, presented the Final Adoption. Board member Diane Legreide moved the resolution, DOT designee Joe Bertoni seconded it and it was unanimously adopted.

2110-02 Final Adoption Commercial Driver License (CDL) Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT)

This is a Final Adoption. The Commission proposes these amendments following new rules promulgated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Megan Mazzoni from our Legal and Regulatory Department presented the Final Adoption. Designee Heitmann moved the resolution and Board member Diane Legreide seconded it and it was unanimously adopted.

2110-03 Re-adoption (without amendments) N.J.A.C. 16:53, Buses

This is a Re-adoption. The effect of this item is to continue regulations as part of the Commission's practices and procedures concerning Buses. Joanne Sutkin from our Legal and Regulatory Department presented the Rule Proposal. Board Member Diane Legreide moved the resolution and Designee Bertoni seconded it and it was unanimously adopted.

Public Comments: None at this time

Board Comments:

Diane Legreide – Congratulations to Chief, you'll be missed. Good Luck.

Jim Fruscione- Congratulations and best of luck.

Eric Heitmann – Keep up the Good Work and Congratulations.

Steve Scatturo – Congratulations.

Joe Bertoni- - Congratulations, Good Luck and God Bless.

Adjournment:

Since there was no further business, a motion to adjourn was made Board member Legreide and seconded by Designee Heitmann and unanimously adopted at 2:24 p.m.