

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WATER EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

(April 4, 2019)

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority met in regular session at Pier 1, Port of San Francisco.

1. CALL TO ORDER – BOARD CHAIR

Chair Jody Breckenridge called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Breckenridge, Director Anthony Intintoli, and Director Nick Josefowitz were in attendance.

3. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Breckenridge said that she, the Vice Chair, and Executive Director had met with representatives from the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority regarding the Richmond ferry service operating funds and other future ferry services in Contra Costa County. Chair Breckenridge requested that staff bring forward an item for Board discussion at a future meeting to discuss the San Francisco Port Recovery Plan. Chair Breckenridge said that many letters and emails had been received regarding Berkeley ferry service and that all feedback received would be made part of the record to be included in the item for discussion when the matter is agendized for a future Board discussion.

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Intintoli had no report to share.

Director Josefowitz said that he had the opportunity to visit with the City of Berkeley staff responsible for planning, economic development, and the redevelopment of the city's marina - where the city is considering a WETA ferry terminal be built - and he said he remained convinced that a Berkeley ferry service at the marina would be a mistake because of the dearth of housing and employers at the Berkeley Marina. He added that he would have much more to share with Directors when this item is agendized for a future meeting discussion.

Director Josefowitz followed up on a question raised at the March Board meeting and reported that fewer than 30% of BART riders drive to BART stations alone or as part of a carpool. He said this information had been culled from a BART survey of 50,000 or 60,000 commuters and that the data was collected regularly, every five or six years, across the entire BART system.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Ms. Rannells shared her written report with Directors.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jerry Bellows of MARAD asked if there was any information to share about how the Tideline service landings at the Harbor Bay WETA Terminal were going. Ms. Rannells said that because the service had just begun, staff only had received a few days of information to date. She said that she would have ridership information to share at the next Board meeting.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Intintoli made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Board Meeting Minutes – March 7, 2019
- b. Authorize Staff to Issue a Request for Proposals for State Legislative Representation Services

Director Josefowitz seconded the motion and the item passed unanimously.

Yeas: Breckenridge, Intintoli, Josefowitz. Nays: None. Absent: DelBono, Wunderman.

7. OVERVIEW OF DRAFT FY 2019/20 WORK PROGRAM

Ms. Rannells presented this overview of the Draft FY 2019/20 Work Program that outlined the major work items and initiatives anticipated to be undertaken in the coming year and that would be used in building the FY 2019/20 Operating and Capital Budget to be brought forward in May. She noted that this item was intended to provide the Board with a preview of the anticipated work for their discussion and input.

With regard to developing a temporary landing at Pier 48 in Mission Bay, Director Josefowitz extended thanks to staff for their work to accommodate the Chase Center plans for the temporary service in light of the threats and barriers to the RM3 money expected to fund the service. He asked if Golden Gate Ferry was also interested in providing service and Ms. Rannells said yes, and that WETA has a float that could be put in place temporarily to support the service but that the space would only allow for one vessel to land at a time, requiring careful and collaborative scheduling.

With regard to the new Seaplane Lagoon terminal in Alameda, Director Josefowitz said that he and the Vice Chair were very interested in the development of a system wide parking fee program. Ms. Rannells said that WETA staff was working with the City of Alameda to discuss a comprehensive parking program at all Alameda ferry terminals to be managed by the City. Director Josefowitz emphasized his desire for the program and policy to have a general framework that is consistent across the system and noted that this doesn't necessarily mean that the price for parking would need to be the same at every terminal. It was noted that the Vallejo City Council mandated that the parking fees at the Vallejo Ferry Terminal would be enough to cover the cost of maintaining the lot, including security, and that the objective of the fees was never to earn profits from WETA ferry riders.

It was agreed that some of the projects and programs presented in the draft work plan for the coming fiscal year, such as those required to maintain and sustain safe, efficient operation of services, would need to happen whether RM3 funding becomes available or not. The Board noted that new projects related to planning future services or vessels could also move forward but that the Board may need to set priorities for these projects moving forward if RM3 funds are not forthcoming.

Director Josefowitz suggested that staff learn more about the impending work that will be done on the MacArthur Maze highway interchange and how that might affect increased ferry ridership in the WETA system. Mr. Connolly said he had been informed and continually works with Caltrans planners to keep up to date on projects, such as the MacArthur Maze project, that could affect the WETA system.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charlie Bogue, Director of Development and Marketing Strategy for Wind & Wing Technologies (WWT) said that WWT would have a demonstration vessel in Richmond that was 30' long with a 40' wing on it the coming weekend. Mr. Bogue noted that this vessel had an electric drive with wind assist and could travel at a speed of 15-20 knots. He further noted that WWT was currently in the design phase of a zero emission 100 passenger electric and wind vessel that was expected to be completed in 2020. Mr. Bogue

said the WWT technology could possibly support WETA in its small vessel program development, as well as provide incentives that could prove beneficial to WETA in its funding endeavors.

Chair Breckenridge asked Mr. Bogue what area of the bay in Richmond the demonstration vessel could be viewed and he said the predicted weather wasn't that great for going out with the demonstration vessel but that it could be seen at the WWT booth at a boat show that would be taking place in Richmond over the weekend.

8. REVIEW AND PROVIDE INPUT TO HOVERCRAFT FEASIBILITY STUDY SCOPE

Mr. Connolly presented a proposed scope of work for an update of WETA's 2011 Hovercraft Feasibility Study for Directors' review and feedback. He explained that the draft scope of work was intended to update and build on the 2011 WETA study of hovercraft technology as a first portion of work. He said the proposal is to study up to three corridors in detail to provide a real-world test of a hovercraft concept. Mr. Connolly said the study would be performed by a qualified consultant team with expertise in maritime engineering, hovercraft technology, transportation planning, and environmental analysis. In addition to updating the costs and the technology assessment, the study would examine the environmental implications of hovercraft operations in San Francisco Bay, with an emphasis on the sensitive shoreline habitats. Mr. Connolly further explained that the scope proposed that a committee of stakeholders be assembled to meet at key points during the course of the study update and that this group would be made up of representatives from policy advocacy organizations, from the maritime industry, and from environmental groups, as well as public agency officials.

Mr. Connolly explained that with guidance from the Board regarding the proposed scope, staff would bring forward a request for authorization to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a qualified consultant. Mr. Connolly explained that once the consultant was selected, staff estimated the effort would take between 9 and twelve months to complete. He said the cost for the consultant portion of the work was expected to be between \$200,000 and \$400,000, depending upon the extent of the study work.

Director Intintoli said that if the findings show that hovercraft technology could work for WETA service, implementation would require basically two systems, with new landings or terminals to support the hovercraft vessels as well as different captains and crews. He said WETA has had the objective of optimizing its assets by working toward a system where all vessels can land at all terminals. Director Intintoli noted that adding hovercraft into the system would create two distinct systems and he noted that if there are some places in the Bay Area that WETA's more traditional vessels cannot land, that this might be what is needed to expand in those areas. He said he would like to know where else this technology is applied in commute service in the country.

Chair Breckenridge said it is becoming increasingly difficult to dredge in the Bay Area and a potential advantage of hovercraft vessels could be no draft challenges for both current and future new service.

Director Josefowitz said that this study proposal was very exciting and that he was enthusiastic about its potential findings that could enhance and expand WETA ferry service in the Bay Area. That said, he added, he was not as enthusiastic about spending \$400,000 on the study when WETA had limited funds. Director Josefowitz said he looked forward to discussing this in the context of WETA's discretionary budget in order to make a more informed decision about moving forward with this proposed study. Ms. Rannells clarified that WETA has access to different types of funds and that some can be used to support studies and others are only available to support capital projects. She noted that WETA's RM2 Planning & Administration funds provide a pool of money that could support this study.

It was agreed that the prospect of hovercraft technology being utilized to offer new service options to expand WETA's operating system was very attractive and worth taking a holistic look at provided that sufficient funds are available to support this effort.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Grubb, Bay Area Council Chief Operating Officer, thanked WETA for scoping out the study update and said he worked at the Bay Area Council for WETA Vice Chair Wunderman who, he noted, was very enthusiastic about the prospect of having this study updated. He said that he thought that the plan to study just three areas of the Bay Area for the hovercraft technology potential would be limiting. Mr. Grubb urged Directors to include more areas of interest in the study and named Moffett Field, the east and west touchdowns of the Dumbarton Bridge, Foster City, San Leandro Harbor, San Francisco International Airport, Oakland International Airport, Larkspur, interoperability at the San Francisco Ferry Terminal, Antioch, Hercules, and Martinez as examples, noting that there were many others throughout the Bay Area. He said there were vendors interested in helping, and he recommended that WETA consider bringing in private companies to help fund the study.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Simeon Jewell, Founder and Chief Technology Officer of HOVR California said he wanted to address Director Intintoli's concerns about hovercraft technology. Mr. Jewell said that it was his understanding that hovercrafts can land at any WETA terminal because they float just like normal boats. He added that in the south of England there is a hovercraft service that has been operating since the 1960s, and it is the oldest and longest running hovercraft service in the world. Mr. Jewell said this service makes 40 trips a day between the Isle of Wight and the mainland. Ms. Rannells asked if hovercraft technology was used in any sort of regular, public service anywhere else in the world and Mr. Jewell said no because they were put out of business by bridge and tunnel construction.

It was agreed that staff would further refine the study approach, considering options for a limited and more expansive study as well as how private sector funds might be utilized, and bring forward an item to the Board authorizing releasing an RFP for the study at a future meeting.

Chair Breckenridge recessed the meeting at 2:51 p.m. so Directors and guests could take a short break and she called the meeting back to order at 2:56 p.m.

9. RECEIVE SMALL VESSEL EXPLORATORY STUDY FINAL REPORT AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO PROCEED WITH NEXT STEPS IN DEVELOPING A SMALL VESSEL PROGRAM

Mr. Connolly presented this item for Directors to receive the final report of the Small Vessel Exploratory Committee and authorize staff to proceed with the next steps to develop a WETA Small Vessel Program. He said that the advisory committee had operated at a very high level and now staff looked to Directors for approval to proceed in implementing next steps to move the program forward as outlined in the memorandum.

Chair Breckenridge noted that this small vessel program implementation would increase WETA's flexibility in meeting its emergency response mandate.

Director Josefowitz said the small vessel exploratory study committee was the first WETA committee he had participated in, and that it had been a pleasure to work with Director Intintoli. He asked if it would make sense to combine the hovercraft study update work with the small vessel program work. Chair Breckenridge said the two were connected in that both types of vessels could potentially be able to serve the same areas, so it might make sense. It was agreed that the cost to incorporate the two would be a consideration as the Board works to identify the best way to best utilize WETA's limited funds.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Estrada, Inland Boatman's Union Northern California Regional Director, said that in his experience watching WETA work over many years - from the agency's initial concept to its current status – he has witnessed ideal decision making at opportune moments, and he said the agency's leadership has been phenomenal. Mr. Estrada emphasized that this was never clearer to him than WETA's recent efforts to pursue a smaller vessel fleet. He said that adding smaller vessels to WETA's current fleet would give WETA's system a polishing and fine granularity - providing flexibility, versatility, and agility - and he said that it reflected precisely the kind of positive step forward one sees in mature, established organizations. Mr. Estrada said he understood and respected Director Intintoli's concerns about costs and making promises to Bay Area ferry riders that might never be kept due to funding constraints, and he also hoped another cautionary consideration Directors will be taking into account as they look at these ideas is that it would be unwise at this point to release control of the centralized planning for the system, and hand it over to create a franchise outfit with private, for-profit operators. Mr. Estrada cautioned that it could become very difficult for WETA to grow and expand politically, and otherwise, into the future if that control were relinquished. He emphasized that franchising out WETA's operations would likely result in a regrettable and long term lost opportunity.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jerry Bellows of MARAD asked if WETA had decided on the 75 passenger vessel as the actual small vessel size for WETA or if various sizes of smaller vessels would be considered. Mr. Connolly replied that the 75 passenger vessel was used for the study analysis because it was a vessel size already in use in the state down in Long Beach. He added that a 48 passenger vessel model – more common when one thinks of a “small vessel” and with the same general capacity of a bus – was decidedly too small to maximize its use. Mr. Connolly explained that the next step up would be to a capacity of 149 passengers, and WETA already had vessels in their fleet that were pretty close to that size. He reiterated that part of the study's “next steps” would be to identify the right capacity for WETA small vessels as a part of developing design specifications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bellows said that if WETA were to combine the hovercraft study update with the next steps in the small vessel program, that it could be more difficult to bring it all together in a helpful way because hovercraft vessels could be larger than the small vessels.

Chair Breckenridge said that the current WETA vessel fleet is comprised primarily of newer, high capacity, larger vessels that have service lives of at least 25 years, and there is no expectation that WETA would begin replacing its fleet with hovercrafts. She said the current WETA fleet cannot reach some locations in the Bay Area that could benefit from a water transportation option, and these areas could possibly be served by either smaller vessels or by hovercraft. Therefore, she further explained, it might make some sense to combine the small vessel program with the hovercraft study update to look at them together for those areas in the scope of future expansion and enhancement of the WETA system. Chair Breckenridge added that this was the consideration and possible objective for a near term period of three to five years.

Director Josefowitz asked what the next steps were for this item and whether that work would require spending more money. Chair Breckenridge said the objective was to approve the study and authorize staff to move forward to develop an implementation plan and program. Further clarification on the cost would be provided as the program is developed and future actions brought forward for Board consideration and action.

Director Josefowitz said he supported approval of the report and authorizing staff to move forward with next steps as proposed with the understanding that staff would consider how the small vessel and hovercraft work might be combined or optimized to best use WETA's financial resources.

Chair Breckenridge seconded the motion and the item passed unanimously.

Yeas: Breckenridge, Intintoli, Josefowitz. Nays: None. Absent: DelBono, Wunderman.

10. TREASURE ISLAND PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Connolly presented an update on the Treasure Island project and said that since the last Board discussion on the project in February, staff had met with Treasure Island Mobility Management Agency (TIMMA) staff to discuss service delivery details and costs. As a part of this presentation, Ms. Rannells noted that staff had taken the time to provide more detailed written background information about WETA's long history – spanning well over ten years - in working with various City of San Francisco agency staffs as a partner in developing the Treasure Island ferry terminal and service. She felt this was necessary due to some statements made at the previous meeting that made it seem as if WETA had just recently engaged in work to support this project. She clarified that WETA had led early design work and helped secure some federal funds for the project, and that staff was heavily invested in the project, as was WETA as an agency in its partnering with the City of San Francisco to move the project forward when possible. Ms. Rannells added that an MOU for the project had been first drafted with WETA nearly a decade ago but never finalized.

Mr. Connolly said that at the most recent meeting with TIMMA, operating costs for WETA service and private service were compared, and that the WETA service costs were slightly lower than the private service being considered. He noted that the WETA numbers had been calculated using educated cost estimates, because WETA was not yet operating its small vessels and therefore did not have precise cost details. Mr. Connolly added that the differences in the comparative costs were in labor and fuel.

Mr. Connolly said it was agreed at the most recent meeting that TIMMA and WETA would continue working together, and he said WETA had recently received the design information for the proposed terminal. He explained that WETA had some concerns about the planned terminal design, and would be providing comments detailing those with the hope that the information would be acknowledged and that WETA would be able to work with the terminal designers to address the concerns.

The question was asked as to whether the service would operate as a public transit service, with public money, or as a private service with public money. Mr. Connolly invited Eric Cordoba, Deputy Director for Capital Projects at the San Francisco County Transportation Authority and staff to TIMMA, to speak on the matter.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Cordoba said that what TIMMA had been doing with regard to public and private operators was getting educated with regard to cost. He said to aid in the process, they have been soliciting information from private operators. Mr. Cordoba said he wanted to thank WETA staff for sitting down to talk about costs twice now, because those discussions were important to TIMMA given that the future ferry service was fundamental to transporting people to and from the island. He emphasized that TIMMA wanted to continue those discussions with WETA. Mr. Cordoba acknowledged that draft MOUs had been passed back and forth for several years, and he said TIMMA wanted to continue to work on that. He said while all of this was taking place, numerous entities continued their efforts to try and figure out a toll and parking program, and an affordability program.

Mr. Cordoba said the hope was that details would be sorted and a final plan would be adopted this summer. He said the developer was moving forward with terminal construction, and he was sorry to hear that there were some concerns from WETA about the terminal design. He asked that WETA's terminal design concerns be shared in a more formal discussion as soon as possible because his understanding had been that since the design was done by Moffatt Nichol, a reputable marine engineering firm, they would understand all WETA's requirements. Mr. Cordoba said the terminal

construction would be underway soon because the company that was constructing WETA's new Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal project was in the process of signing the Treasure Island construction agreement.

Mr. Cordoba further explained that the objectives for the future ferry service on Treasure Island were that it would be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and union friendly with the appropriate unions on board to support the effort. He said TIMMA had provided WETA with information and WETA had responded with information and he wants to see these discussions and this cooperation continue. Mr. Cordoba said this is the intention and he wants to assure that this is in the record. He added that ridership forecasting is in the works and the hope is to be able to share those details with WETA sometime soon.

Ms. Rannells said that it sounded like everyone was pretty much on the same page and that there was much more work to be done. Director Josefowitz said he was glad the discussions were so productive and going so well and he encouraged everyone to continue their efforts and keep talking to each other about this project that was currently the largest transportation development effort happening in the Bay Area in a place where tens of thousands of people and families were expected to be able to live affordably very near to their jobs in San Francisco, Oakland and the surrounding cities. Director Josefowitz emphasized the importance of this project to the Bay Area, and the fundamental need to get it right, most especially in these early planning and development stages.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cordoba said he was impressed with the small boat study because small boats made the most sense for the early Treasure Island service. He reiterated that TIMMA was very interested in WETA's small boats and in hydroelectric boats and even wind powered boats if that's what it is going to take. He said these alternative propulsion boats would bring money to the table and that TIMMA was interested in doing whatever it takes to support that by building infrastructure on the island to support it.

Ms. Rannells said WETA was also interested in these possibilities and that they had been included in the discussions with TIMMA. She said that WETA would continue to emphasize the importance of building the critical infrastructure on the island to support newer technology vessels if alternative propulsion vessels are desired for the service.

Directors agreed that with the desired service start date moved up to 2021, time was scant for these planning efforts, and the execution of a MOU was a critical missing piece of this puzzle which should be signed as soon as possible so that all partners had clarity on their roles and responsibilities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cordoba explained that many of the discussions about the service with WETA took place prior to his work on the project, and added that he had joined the team only about three and a half years ago. He said that, quite frankly, the most urgent task for his team at this time was solidifying a toll and affordability plan. He said the fifteen month lead time for WETA to build a boat was understood and they were doing the best they can. He thanked Directors for their efforts and their partnership.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No additional public comments were shared.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END