

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

(April 9, 2020)

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority met in regular session via teleconference consistent with California Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Order N-25-20 to ensure social distancing and help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

1. CALL TO ORDER – BOARD CHAIR

Chair James Wunderman called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Wunderman, Director Anthony Intintoli and Director Jeffrey DeIBono were in attendance.

3. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wunderman reported that Director Nick Josefowitz had resigned from the WETA Board. He noted that until a new Director was appointed, all three remaining Directors would need to be present at meetings to assure the Board has a quorum. He also advised Directors that to move forward with WETA business, the Board would need full consensus.

Chair Wunderman said given the current crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the world was operating in uncharted waters at this time. He commended WETA's Executive Director Nina Rannells for her tremendous and thoughtful work on the Board reports, especially for Agenda Item 7 related to the challenges WETA was facing in light of the virus pandemic crisis. Chair Wunderman said WETA was competing for funding with all transit agencies in the Bay Area, and he emphasized the need for all WETA stakeholders and any parties interested in water transit to stand up for WETA in its funding pursuit efforts. He added that a silver lining could be found in the opportunities WETA had at this time to educate people about the "E" for emergency in WETA's name and mission.

Chair Wunderman also commended health officials, and especially California Governor Gavin Newsom, for taking the early and wise actions to instruct residents to stay at home to mitigate transmission of the virus.

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Intintoli echoed the comments of the Chair and said staff had done an excellent job in laying out the challenges WETA was facing at this uncertain time. Director Intintoli said he hoped all would have the patience to be able to thoroughly discuss and consider the difficult information on the agenda today.

Director DeIBono said that in his capacity as an emergency first responder he had spent a lot of time in state and county emergency response meetings and exercises. He echoed the Chair's comments on commending state leadership for the response to the crisis. He said that the state of California was absolutely doing the right thing by ordering people to shelter in place, and he noted that the peak of the virus crisis in California was expected to be on April 17.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Ms. Rannells provided her written report to Directors and welcomed questions. She noted that her report would be brief given the extensive reporting she would be providing Directors for Item 7.

Ms. Rannells said WETA's third new North Bay vessel, the MV *Lyra*, had arrived and been put into service the day before. She also reported that WETA's Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal Expansion project construction had been temporarily shut down per San Francisco's shelter-in-place orders. Ms. Rannells said a request to reinstate some of that construction was currently in process because there was work that WETA would like to have continued while things were generally quiet.

Ms. Rannells said that the California Air Resource Board (CARB) was continuing its process to solicit public comments on a proposed concept for ferry vessel emission reductions. She said WETA had requested an extension of the public comments period by six months to a year to enable WETA's participation in the process with important, well prepared comments. Ms. Rannells said that in response to WETA's request and those of others, CARB had extended the comment period by one month. She said WETA worked with the California Transit Association to include this extension as one of the many regulatory relief measures they were advocating for at the state level on behalf of public transit. She said that as things stand now, comments were due on April 30.

It was agreed that one month was not nearly enough of an extension for this important process, and the Board and Ms. Rannells committed to moving the extension effort to the next level by contacting legislators and CARB. Chair Wunderman said he would contact CARB Chair Mary Nichols directly to discuss the matter.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on the Executive Director's Report and there were none.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Board Meeting Minutes - March 12, 2020
- b. Board Meeting Minutes - March 19, 2020
- c. Authorize Release of a Request for Qualifications for On-Call Professional Services
- d. Authorize Release of an Invitation for Bids for Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal Mooring Piling Project

Chair Wunderman called for public comments and there were none.

Director Intintoli seconded the motion and the consent calendar carried unanimously.

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

7. CONSIDER ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON WETA OPERATIONS

Chair Wunderman thanked Ms. Rannells for her thoughtful and thorough Board materials on this Item. He said the issues had been laid out very well, and he urged everyone to read the Board packet cover to cover to get a clear view of the issues at hand. He said he would like to spend more time with the materials as well. Chair Wunderman said that at the conclusion of this discussion, one option may be for Directors to return in a few weeks to make some very important decisions.

Ms. Rannells presented Item 7 to consider actions to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on WETA operations. She said everyone continues to learn new things daily about the state of the

crisis. Ms. Rannells explained that she and her staff had been working to assess WETA's financial position and risks, to monitor service, to seek funding, to keep the public informed and to plan for recovery with little to no concrete information about how to proceed. She said having WETA's entire workforce dispersed so suddenly had added to the challenges.

Ms. Rannells reminded the Board that at the March 19 special meeting, Directors had asked that staff bring an item to the April Board meeting to extend the Blue & Gold Fleet contract and to seek funding for operations and emergency response. She said staff would work to evaluate the contract and bring that item forward in the coming months. Ms. Rannells explained that WETA was currently operating 2 of its usual 11 vessels and 4 of its usual 25 crews, and she noted that boardings had declined from an average 9,000 daily to 283 today. She said these numbers continued to decline, and that 70 people had ridden the ferry from Vallejo to San Francisco and only 16 rode in from Alameda and Oakland that morning. She said that no one was riding WETA's midday service.

Ms. Rannells said she believed it was important for WETA to maintain a presence on the Bay and to exercise its vessels at a minimum level of service during this crisis but with a focus on commute period service. When asked by the Chair if she thought WETA should maintain its midday service, Ms. Rannells answered no. Director Intintoli said continuing the midday service with no one riding made no sense because WETA would be spending funds the agency needs to maintain its system during this crisis. Ms. Rannells noted that if the midday service was suspended and a valid need for it arose in the future, the service could be reinstated at that time. Director DelBono said he would like to hear the full presentation on this Item before sharing his thoughts on the midday service lack of ridership.

Ms. Rannells said that in an effort to more fully utilize WETA vessels and crews during this time, staff had reached out to hospitals and health care industry associations to inquire whether a temporary service to Mission Bay for essential employees at the University of California at San Francisco and Kaiser would be helpful. She said the answer had been no because there was plenty of parking available and employees were utilizing other methods of transportation right now.

Ms. Rannells reported that updated health orders issued on March 31 had included new requirements for social distancing including marking six-foot spaces for passengers waiting in line. She said work had been completed to support those new orders, with messaging and markings on WETA's terminal gangways.

Ms. Rannells said that immediately following the March 19 special board meeting, she had informed Blue & Gold Fleet that WETA wanted to maintain its existing crew levels and that crews not operating active service should conduct training, support maintenance activities and be prepared to operate emergency response services, as per the Board's direction. She noted that in addition to the 4 crews operating WETA's current limited service that 4 additional shadow crews had also been in rotation as a 100% back-up, and they were also doing training and light maintenance during their rotations. She said 2 crews were at the ready to work on weekends if called, and 15 crews were at home sheltering in place when not on active duty. She noted that about 36% of WETA's total workforce were in active duty and working at one time. Ms. Rannells noted that Blue & Gold Fleet was only comfortable having 8 crews on site at a time on weekdays given social distancing orders. She said that the WETA Operations team was utilizing the opportunity of having many vessels available for maintenance and engineering diligence. Ms. Rannells added that the Operations team had a comprehensive vessel and facilities list of projects and was also undertaking a major inventory project. Ms. Rannells said the additional and new cleaning and disinfecting protocols of vessels continued and was being done throughout the day by active crews on vessels in operation daily and weekly on vessels not being used for service.

Ms. Rannells said that WETA had partially activated its Emergency Operations Center by staffing the Public Information Officer and Liaison positions. She explained that Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall was monitoring the media to assure that clear, consistent, and accurate messaging was reaching the public. She noted that Mr. Hall was also participating in weekly Joint Information Center meetings with all Bay Area transit operators to assure coordinated messaging. Ms. Rannells said as Liaison, Program Manager/Analyst Lauren Gularte was participating in regular calls with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to provide status reports on operations. She said Ms. Gularte had also reached out to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Transportation System Recovery Unit to keep them informed of WETA's status. Ms. Rannells said WETA had put out press releases and created a COVID-19 Fact Sheet that informed the public on how the COVID-19 crisis was impacting WETA and its services. She said WETA continued to work with direct media outlets to get clear, accurate and consistent information out to the public.

Ms. Rannells said WETA was currently seeking emergency funding both as a transit operator and for emergency response. She said WETA sent a March 20 letter to Governor Newsom and copied Cal OES Director Marc Ghilarducci and his staff along with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA). She noted copies of the letter had also been sent to the offices of Assemblymembers David Chiu and Rob Bonta. Ms. Rannells said that WETA's State Legislative Representatives Jennifer Capitolo and Nate Solov were working overtime to assure folks were aware of WETA's needs. She said they were working closely with Assemblymember Chiu and that WETA had prepared a draft letter for the Assemblymember to assist in providing support for WETA's requests. Ms. Rannells said staff had also provided some bill language to address the concern that WETA was mandated to provide emergency response service with no funding source to support that mission.

Ms. Rannells said that staff had also submitted a list of shovel-ready projects to Governor Newsom's office that may be included as part of a future economic stimulus bill, and she noted that interest in a bailout bill at the state level had dwindled with the passing of the federal CARES Act. She noted that the request had arrived on March 26 and said staff had scant time to submit the information. She said WETA had sent letters advocating transit funding and had worked with MTC to approach Speaker Nancy Pelosi in efforts to secure a significant amount of \$1.3 billion in transit funding to the Bay Area MTC region. Ms. Rannells said WETA's share of that amount was expected to be between \$12.5 and \$20 million overall and explained that the distribution of funds between Bay Area transit operators would be determined by MTC. She said the earliest WETA could expect to receive any of this funding would be late June. Ms. Rannells said there was talk of a future federal economic stimulus bill that would provide capital project funding and that staff would work closely with WETA's federal representatives to submit projects at the appropriate time. She said staff had identified some additional Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) funding that could be used to offset WETA's increased costs for vessel cleaning and personal protective equipment for crews. Ms. Rannells noted that to date, no regional funding sources had been identified.

Director Intintoli reminded the Board that WETA had been returning Regional Measure 2 bridge toll funds it had not spent each fiscal year back to MTC for years, and he asked Ms. Rannells how much in total had been returned. Ms. Rannells said she believed the total amount to be \$70 to \$90 million. The Chair suggested working with WETA's allies at MTC on the matter.

In response to a question from Director DelBono, Ms. Rannells said she would forward him a confirmed date that Assemblymembers David Chiu and Rob Bonta received WETA's letter regarding funding from WETA.

Ms. Rannells reminded Directors that the April Board meeting had been moved out one week. She said because of that, she had worked with the Chair and extended WETA's payment for one additional week for Blue & Gold Fleet crews standing by. She requested that Directors ratify that decision and action. She noted that in this rapidly changing operating landscape that WETA may need to pivot service as needs arise, and she said doing so may not require calling a special board meeting and she wanted Directors to weigh in on this.

Ms. Rannells said WETA's financial situation continued to evolve, and that about 92% of WETA's revenues come from fares and tolls, with the fares share being about \$2.3 million a month. She said MTC had not provided a final figure yet, but it was anticipated that WETA would lose as much as \$3 million in RM2 toll funding this year. She said if things continued as-is through June of this year, WETA will be facing an \$11 million revenue shortfall.

Ms. Rannells explained that \$47.7 million of WETA's \$51.7 million budget was purchased transportation and fuel, and she noted that these were variable expenses. She said at this time of year, WETA typically utilizes 25 crews at a cost of \$600,000 each annually and noted that the workforce increased to as many as 29 crews during the busier summer months. She said currently, WETA was utilizing 4 active crews for its service. She noted Blue & Gold Fleet employed 22 full-time engineers for WETA work and that they were all currently being kept busy by the WETA Operations team. Ms. Rannells said fuel makes up about \$10 million of the budget and that with the current reduced service schedule, WETA was seeing a weekly fuel cost savings of \$83,250.

Ms. Rannells told Directors that, as they had requested at the March 19 meeting, staff had prepared a letter request to the governor for state funds to support an estimated \$4 million year-end shortfall, emphasizing the need for funds to support WETA's emergency response role. She noted that staff is also pursuing a small amount of FEMA funding for the increased cleaning and precautions required to protect public health. She said the first tranche of the federal CARES Act funding WETA was expected to receive would be \$12.5 million with an expectation that it would fill WETA's funding gaps through at least the end of 2020. Ms. Rannells explained that additionally, WETA had an accumulated balance of funds which had been earmarked by Directors in two 2019 meeting discussions to fund WETA's new Seaplane Lagoon service and Mission Bay activities. She noted that some of these funds also served to meet WETA's capital and operating reserve targets. She noted that these commitments could be revisited as circumstances required.

Ms. Rannells said that since Blue & Gold Fleet was only able to allow 8 crews on site at a time, she recommended keeping 8 crews online and to work with Blue & Gold Fleet who will work with their crew unions to assure WETA would be able to quickly ramp up service when the time comes for that. She reminded Directors that the Blue & Gold Fleet contract was structured to provide crews to support WETA service levels.

Ms. Rannells said the final piece of her report was about developing a recovery plan. She said at this time we know recovery could begin as early as May 1, when the current health orders were currently scheduled to be lifted, but that information about this virus continues to evolve and there was no concrete date WETA could point to right now as the recovery commencement date. Ms. Rannells explained that MTC would require a recovery plan as a condition of receipt of any CARES Act funds.

Chair Wunderman said that Ms. Rannells had reviewed some very difficult challenges. He said he fully supported paying the Blue & Gold Fleet WETA crews the additional week of pay but added that he felt a final decision on these issues would require spending some more time with all the information. He said it may make sense to extend the plan to pay all of the crews by an additional period of time beyond just the one week that had already been extended.

In response to questions from the Chair, Ms. Rannells said that she understood that a court date had not yet been set for the RM3 appeal but that this may change with a teleconferencing option in the future. She said WETA could expect to lose up to \$3 million in RM2 toll funding this year and up to \$10 million next year, and she noted that this loss would depend on a number of factors such as how long health orders would restrict movement and how the ramp up will work when orders are finally lifted. Ms. Rannells said that under MTC procedures, just 38% of tolls collected each year can be used for transit operations. She reiterated that WETA had left approximately \$70 to \$90 million of unused RM2 ferry operating funds on the table over the years due to MTC's use-it-or-lose-it policy and that it would be helpful if these could be available to WETA now in this time of need. In response to a question from Chair Wunderman, Ms. Rannells said that MTC had used a 10-month projection period of March through December 2020 in projecting the regional shortfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been used in advocating for the federal CARES Act funding.

Ms. Rannells said that the Blue & Gold Fleet contract included a section about crew reductions in emergency situations which might apply in the use of the CARES Act funding to pay for WETA's contract operator crews. Directors discussed whether the funding WETA would be receiving from the CARES Act could be used for WETA on-duty crews and for WETA crews sheltering in place at home when not in rotation. They agreed this was important information to clarify.

Director Intintoli said if there was a possibility of securing any funding to support paying for crews who were not in active duty, he would like that possibility revisited every few weeks until it was clear and confirmed. He added that paying more staff than was needed to support current service levels without this funding or reimbursement confirmation could jeopardize WETA's future service plans, such as Seaplane Lagoon in Alameda. Director Intintoli said if the Board could revisit the issue every few weeks he would be in favor of extending the Blue & Gold Fleet full crew payments by two weeks.

Director DelBono made a motion to:

- Approve the actions taken by the Executive Director already to extend the payment to Blue & Gold Fleet WETA crews by one additional week through today's Board meeting date of April 9;
- Extend the paid status of WETA's crews under Blue & Gold Fleet employment through April 23;
- Call a special Board meeting to review this matter again on April 23; and
- Mandate that any reduction to service or staffing levels going forward will be approved by the WETA Board in advance.

Director Intintoli seconded the motion with the caveat that he had understood that the Board had already approved of the midday service suspension because of the cost and no ridership earlier in the meeting. Chair Wunderman said he would like to see a unanimous decision on the midday service elimination. Director DelBono said he wanted a united front and he agreed that it did not make sense to run service with no riders.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

San Francisco Regional Director of the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU) Robert Estrada said he had a lot of respect for the WETA Board and Ms. Rannells. He noted that on March 19, when Directors agreed to continue to pay full crews, WETA's funding had been much more tenuous than it currently was with the passing of the CARES Act. He said the \$4 million requested was also much more in WETA's grasp. Mr. Estrada said the crews currently working on WETA's vessels had been basically frozen in place when the service was changed. He said he hoped Directors would give Blue

& Gold Fleet the latitude to switch out less senior crew members with more senior crew members to support IBU objectives on behalf of its members.

Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P) Regional Representative Captain Sly Hunter thanked Directors and staff for their hard work. He said it was so important for WETA to be recognized not just as a public transit agency but also as an emergency preparedness entity which must be prepared at the drop of a dime to react and provide emergency services. He said that Blue & Gold Fleet and the unions were working in concert to manage this crisis and they would continue to do so.

IBU President Marina Secchitano said WETA had done really good work. She said the Bay Area was very lucky to have Speaker Nancy Pelosi on its team. She said Speaker Pelosi had done a phenomenal job in putting American families first. Ms. Secchitano said that all the comments shared by her colleagues had been very important. She noted that the federal funding was being provided to help families and businesses during this crisis to assure everyone would be able to keep working, from Alaska to Washington. She said these states were keeping all their ferry crews working with the help of this federal funding. Ms. Secchitano said this crisis experience will inform all future budgeting to assure WETA and other transit agencies can weather these kinds of storms when they swell again. She said WETA will be remembered for how it handles this crisis, and she thanked WETA Directors and staff for their efforts.

Director DeBono requested clarity on Mr. Estrada's request regarding crew seniority. Ms. Rannells explained that Blue & Gold Fleet crews don't all work solely on WETA's vessels. She said there are schedules released four times a year for crew bidding on routes and schedules and that the crews had been frozen in place at WETA's request since WETA's service changes. Ms. Rannells said the seniority concern is a function of Blue & Gold's agreement with the unions and not in WETA's direct control. Mr. DeBono said that his priority was for crews to be available and at the ready to operate WETA vessels when needed.

Directors had a robust discussion about wanting to be unanimous in its decisions at this time, the prudence of eliminating service with no passengers and the importance of empowering staff under Ms. Rannells direction to make decisions about pivoting or increasing service levels quickly in the current rapidly changing landscape. Chair Wunderman said he would like to see an updated financial outlook for the rest of 2020 through 2021 when the Board meets next.

Director Intintoli made an amended motion second to:

- Approve the actions taken by the Executive Director already to extend the payment to Blue & Gold Fleet WETA crews by one additional week through today's Board meeting date of April 9;
- Approve the suspension of the current midday services with no ridership as recommended by Ms. Rannells;
- Extend the timeline of paying all Blue & Gold Fleet WETA crews by two more weeks through April 23 when Directors will meet again to discuss the matter; and
- Mandate that any future *reductions* to service or staffing levels will be approved by the WETA Board in advance

Ms. Rannells confirmed that Directors approved of her taking actions to *pivot* or *increase* service in this rapidly changing environment.

Director DeBono seconded the amended motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

Director DelBono reiterated that WETA could use all partners', stakeholder's and other interested parties' hands on deck to advocate for state funding for WETA with letter writing to Assemblymembers Chiu and Bonta, especially. Ms. Rannells welcomed emails from anyone who could offer support and said she could share materials WETA has prepared to date that could be useful in those efforts.

Directors said WETA had a wonderful staff and noted their appreciation of the work they were doing during these especially challenging times. They also acknowledged WETA's vessel crews working on the front lines and noted that all feedback received about WETA crews had been positive.

8. WITHDRAW CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED FY 2020/21-2024/25 FARE PROGRAM AND RELATED FARE ADJUSTMENTS

Planning & Development Manager Kevin Connolly presented this item seeking Board approval to withdraw consideration of the proposed fiscal years 2020/21 through 2024/25 Fare Program and related fare adjustments. He explained that consistent with other agencies until there was clarity on the public transportation landscape, staff recommended that the Board withdraw consideration of the Fare Program and related fare adjustments. Mr. Connolly said that in the process of preparing for the anticipated fare changes WETA had done a lot of outreach to the public. He said the overwhelming majority of the feedback received had been related to the proposed elimination of the Vallejo Monthly Pass. He said some concerns about the Alameda/Oakland split cost increase had also been received. As a result of this feedback, Mr. Connolly said, staff had made some changes. He noted however, that given the current crisis situation, staff would return to the Board again when it made sense to do so.

Directors concurred that this was not the time to be considering the Fare Program changes.

Director Intintoli made a motion to approve the item.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on the motion, and there were none.

Director DelBono seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

9. AUTHORIZE RELEASE OF THE DRAFT 2020 SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2019 - 2020 THROUGH 2028 - 2029 FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Senior Planner/Project Manager Mike Gougherty presented this item to authorize release of the Draft 2020 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) for Fiscal Years 2019 - 2020 through 2020 - 2029 for public comment. Mr. Gougherty explained that the SRTP goal was to offer a vision for the future. He said it projects out for ten years and noted that the projects included in the SRTP must be fiscally constrained. Mr. Gougherty said the period included in a Strategic Plan was 20 to 50 years. He explained that the SRTP can and will be modified, and the projects in it were not set in stone. Mr. Gougherty said as an obvious example, the COVID-19 virus crisis could radically alter the plans that had been included, and he noted that the SRTP was typically updated every 2 to 4 years but could be updated as soon as a year from now.

Mr. Gougherty said if Directors authorized its release, it would be posted online for public comments over the next two months. He said the SRTP Draft assumed pre-COVID-19 service levels and it significantly expanded service over the next 10 years in its 10-year operating plan. Mr. Gougherty added that it also assumed every service would be enhanced over the next 10 years as each service reached its capacity constraints. He said other assumptions in the SRTP Draft included RM3 funding becoming available to WETA by 2023, the addition of five new service routes (Seaplane Lagoon,

Mission Bay, Treasure Island, Berkeley and Redwood City) and a capital improvement plan to support the service expansion. He noted that enhancement options included increased service or using larger vessels.

Chair Wunderman said he had not yet been able to thoroughly read the Short Range Transit Plan included in the Board packet. He added that he would like to spend more time with the material. Ms. Rannells offered that staff could open up the public comment period to two months, instead of one, and return to the Board in June after receiving Directors' direct comments on the Draft.

Mr. Gougherty said staff would consider all Director's direct comments and all public comments received during the two-month period before returning to the Board in June for the Board's final approval of the document.

Mr. Connolly said many of WETA's Planning counterparts at other agencies were still hard at work from their homes during this time. He said this document was typically read and commented on by other planning agencies or planning professionals at other agencies. Mr. Intintoli asked if comments could include suggestions for other projects not included in the Draft, and Mr. Gougherty said all comments would be welcomed.

Director Intintoli made a motion to approve the item.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on the motion, and there were none.

Director DelBono seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

10. APPROVE FINAL LIST OF REGIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS FOR INCLUSION IN PLAN BAY AREA 2050

Mr. Gougherty presented this request for Directors to approve the final list of regionally-significant projects for inclusion in Plan Bay Area 2050. He explained that Plan Bay Area was a long-range planning document of regionally-significant projects prepared for a 30-year timeline. He emphasized that a project had to be included in the Plan Bay Area document to be eligible for federal and regional funding.

Mr. Gougherty explained that each transit operator submits its Board-approved projects in June. He said that in general, WETA's projects had scored well and that staff recommended that the same projects that had been approved by Directors last year remain in the document for the next update. He said the two projects submitted by WETA - service enhancements and Redwood City - had been scored using MTC modeling that made it a challenge to capture all details of a project. Mr. Gougherty said staff had worked with MTC to address its objectives and said WETA would be including public-private partnerships (P3s) in the Redwood City Business Plan to increase the project's cost benefit. He said WETA would also be participating in the means-based fare programs for Bay Area riders as soon as that opportunity was extended to all transit operators. He said it was WETA's hope that this participation would help meet MTC's equity objectives.

Chair Wunderman said it was critical to move forward, and he noted that the Bay Area's mass transit system was publicly financed. He said while he was a big believer in P3s, it was important to understand that adding P3s to that mix can sometimes complicate projects. He asked to be kept in the loop on the addition of any P3s to WETA projects.

In response to a question from Director Intintoli, Mr. Gougherty confirmed that WETA was the lead development agency, or Project Sponsor, on the two projects, and this was why they were being submitted as WETA projects.

Director Intintoli made a motion to approve the item.

Chair Wunderman said that when the RM3 funding becomes available to WETA, the public will expect new routes beyond what has already been identified. He said he would like staff to set up a working group to explore new ferry service in Martinez as requested in a recent letter to the Board from Martinez Mayor Rob Schroder. He said it may make sense to include the surrounding cities of Hercules and Antioch in that consideration as well. Chair Wunderman said he hoped that by 2050, WETA would be operating service in the Carquinez Strait as well as in Redwood City and well south of Redwood City.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HOVR California Founder and Chief Executive Officer Felix Sargent asked if anyone from the San Mateo City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) was working with WETA on a new project that aligned with WETA's current Hovercraft investigations. Mr. Gougherty said there was plenty of time to get new tangible projects included in the next update if they meet the criteria for inclusion. He said WETA's project requirements included a dedicated funding stream or agreements already in place for the project, and he noted that the document was updated every 4 years. Mr. Connolly explained that a project also generally needed to have already gone through a feasibility process to be included. He said members of C/CAG regularly participated in one of WETA's Hovercraft Feasibility Study Groups, and they had never expressed any interest in forming a WETA project partnership. Mr. Connolly explained that it was the responsibility of a project's sponsor to connect with potential partners, and he noted that WETA staff was always happy to discuss projects.

Director DelBono seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

City of Martinez Community Development Director Christina Ratcliffe said she was representing Martinez Mayor Rob Schroder today because he had been called away. Ms. Ratcliffe thanked the Board for their time to hear her comments realizing that Directors were dealing with really big issues.

Ms. Ratcliffe said Martinez had been active in the past year in its waterfront development and nearby downtown revitalization efforts. She reminded Directors that Mayor Schroder had asked WETA to form a working group to further explore Martinez ferry service feasibility at WETA's Board meeting in December. She said that formation of a working group to study Martinez ferry service would help WETA fulfill its mission and assist it in charting a course forward without being a drain on the limited resources WETA had during this crisis.

Ms. Ratcliffe said a Martinez ferry service would help WETA meet its emergency response mission by linking other parts of the bay with the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, Kaiser and the Veteran's Administration Hospital which were all in Martinez. She said it would also help stimulate housing and economic development by adding to the downtown Martinez renaissance taking place not far from the marina. Ms. Ratcliffe noted that the Martinez population of 38,000 swelled by more than 10,000 each weekday with the influx of courthouse and medical facilities visitors and commuters

coming in for work and said it was important to provide other transportation options and connectivity to these key community resources.

Ms. Ratcliffe said Martinez was also working on its State Trust Land Use Plan for its marina that will serve as the foundation for the update of the Martinez Waterfront Master Plan which Martinez had committed funding and resources to in its next budget cycle. Ms. Ratcliffe said Martinez had also been working closely with the Contra Costa Transportation Agency and the City of Antioch to increase connectivity and the pilot commuter water ferry.

Ms. Ratcliffe noted that the objective of a Martinez ferry service working group would be to gather and evaluate data that would indicate whether a ferry in Martinez with routes that could include Antioch, Hercules and San Francisco could be viable. She said that while the ferry working group would move this opportunity forward, it would require minimal WETA staff time of about two hours a month, with the heavy lifting being done by City of Martinez staff. On behalf of Mayor Schroder, Ms. Ratcliffe asked Directors to review the working group draft plan that he had sent the Board in a recent letter and move forward with the working group.

Chair Wunderman thanked Ms. Ratcliffe for her comments and asked that she thank Mayor Schroder for the information as well. He said it was his hope that WETA will one day be able to proactively spur positive development instead of reacting to requests. Ms. Rannells said WETA staff did not have the bandwidth to launch this work right now but could hopefully look at moving forward sometime this summer. She said that it would be important to consult with and include the Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA) as a partner in this effort as the lead transportation planning and funding agency in Contra Costa County. She suggested talking with them first, in consultation with Martinez, about the best way forward for the work. Ms. Rannells explained that given the many challenges WETA was currently facing in light of the pandemic, staff did not have ample time and resources to fully engage in this process right now. She also said it was likely that WETA's ongoing work in its Hovercraft Feasibility Study would include a north bay focus in the Carquinez Strait and that some ridership data for the area may be generated as a result. Chair Wunderman and Ms. Rannells agreed to further discuss the Martinez request in greater detail after the meeting.

Blue & Gold Fleet President Patrick Murphy acknowledged the very difficult situations WETA and Blue & Gold Fleet were in right now. He said he commended the WETA Board and Ms. Rannells for their leadership during this time. Mr. Murphy said it had been challenging to grow the service so quickly but it was even more difficult to have ridership drop so suddenly. He said he felt that Blue & Gold Fleet was in good hands under the WETA Board leadership.

Chair Wunderman thanked Mr. Murphy for his comments and for Blue & Gold Fleet's efforts during this time especially. He thanked Directors, Ms. Rannells and her staff and asked that all water transit stakeholders band together and remain focused on WETA's long range objectives to create a world class and robust water transit system for the Bay Area.

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting at 4:29 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END