

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

[February 8, 2024]

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority met in regular session at Hanson Bridgett LLP, 425 Market Street 26th Floor, San Francisco, CA and via videoconference.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair James Wunderman called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Wunderman, Vice Chair Monique Moyer, Director Jessica Alba, Director Jeffrey DelBono, and Director Pippin Dew were in attendance

Chair Wunderman led the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed directors, staff, and meeting guests and noted that the meeting was being conducted in person and by videoconference and was being recorded. He advised guests about offering public comment and how guests could sign up to speak throughout the meeting.

3. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wunderman began by thanking WETA Attorney Steven Miller and Hanson Bridgett LLP for hosting WETA.

Chair Wunderman said he had been thinking about the continuing challenges in terms of employees return to the office, public safety issues, economic issues, and the opportunity for changes and improvements to make public transit more available and accessible. He said that a lot has been accomplished over the past quarter century and a more important mission is the commitment to grapple climate change and adapting transportation systems to the land use pattern.

Chair Wunderman stated that it has been a great experience to be a part of the WETA Board and working with the Board members and staff. He remarked that there has been a lot on people's minds with elections happening and said that WETA had recently received some negative comments that were not warranted from a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Commissioner. He noted that he didn't think that the comments elicited much response, noting that the system had a 99% customer satisfaction rate and that more people had returned to the ferries than any other transit system in the region.

Chair Wunderman congratulated Director Alba on her reappointment by California State Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Alba thanked everyone for their support of her reappointment and said that she was excited and proud to be serving another six years and seeing the progress being made in decarbonization, regional seamless transit, equity, workforce development, and emergency response.

Director DelBono said that he was disheartened by the comments from the MTC Commissioner, who once served on WETA's Board and that the Commissioner deserved a response. He stated that the

comments were completely inaccurate, distasteful, and not fair noting that the Board and staff had worked hard to make ferries productive and affordable to cross the bay.

Director Dew stated that she was not familiar with the MTC Commissioner but had seen the article reporting on the Commissioner's comments. Director Dew thought the comments were irrelevant and out of touch with WETA's work. She expressed her excitement at being on the WETA Board and the aspirational work being done by WETA.

Director Dew said that she had attended the Solano Economic Development Corporation's annual stakeholders' breakfast earlier that morning with a panel discussion about California Forever. She said that there were many controversial issues and that transportation was front and center with the ferry being mentioned multiple times.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Executive Director Seamus Murphy welcomed WETA Administrative Specialist Elysa Silveira. He recognized Blue & Gold Fleet (Blue & Gold) President Patrick Murphy for being named President of the Board of Directors of the Passenger Vessel Association (PVA). Mr. Murphy said that the appointment happened during the PVA Annual Convention at MariTrends in Portland where he and Senior Planner/Project Manager Chad Mason presented on different panels and had the opportunity to share what WETA was doing on the decarbonization front. He added that Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Lauren Gularte chaired the public ferry operator's coalition.

Mr. Murphy congratulated WETA Attorney Katherine Tsou of Hanson Bridgett on the arrival of baby Reece.

Mr. Murphy reported that the State of San Francisco Bay Ferry event provided WETA the opportunity to thank its supporter and advocates and share information on the work that is being done and correct the record with people who may have heard or read the inaccurate and meritless comments made by MTC Commissioner Nick Josefowitz. He added that the service of the future is very different than when Commissioner Josefowitz served on WETA's Board.

Mr. Murphy introduced Transportation Planner Arthi Krubanandh to provide an update on the Clipper BayPass. Ms. Krubanandh reminded everyone that Phase 1 was launched in fall 2022 for four educational institutions and MidPen Housing residents. She said that Phase 2 was recently launched with three employers including the Alameda Transportation Management Association (TMA), who manages the transportation programs for their employees and residents. She noted that the program provided an opportunity to attract new ridership and enhance ferry access in the Seaplane service area. She continued the positive note, adding that WETA was observing an average of 400 riders when the Clipper Start program was launched which quadrupled to 1,700 as of last year.

Mr. Murphy added that WETA's fare policy made ferry service more accessible to lower income populations, which is what has really led to the increase in the Clipper Start utilization.

Mr. Murphy introduced Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall to talk about customer experience enhancements recently made. Mr. Hall shared his presentation and said that enhancements included real time terminal displays, data feeds transmitting real time location of vessels, predictions for on-time performance, service alerts, queuing signage, and good mapping tools. He thanked Customer Experience Specialist Rafael Regan for spearheading the project along with consultant BlinkTag.

Mr. Hall reported that San Francisco Bay Ferry was working with Blue & Gold and its concessionaire, S&P concessions, LLC to offer free coffee on all morning departures as an incentive to get commuters back on the ferries. He said that the promotion was receiving a lot of positive feedback and great media attention with a Pay It Forward element that links to virtual food drives at two local food banks.

He added that approximately \$600 had been donated by ferry riders about a month into the promotion and commented that restaffing concessions full time is an important amenity for the passengers and that this is a bridge to bring people back to the ferry.

Chair Wunderman said that these enhancements mean a lot to the passengers.

Director Alba said that she appreciated the creativity of the team and involving staff at all levels to figure out ways to improve the customer experience.

Mr. Murphy asked Mr. Mason to provide an update on the Alameda Main Street Ferry Terminal Rehabilitation Project. Mr. Mason thanked the City of Alameda, construction contractor Manson Construction Co, engineer of record GHD, WETA's engineer COWI, construction manager Jacobs, permitting specialist Dudek, and Blue & Gold.

Mr. Mason shared his presentation that included an overview of the project status. He stated that the project took more than four years of effort from the environmental review, permitting, construction procurement, final design, and construction to include seismic safety operational and technology improvements and future electrification.

Mr. Mason turned the presentation over to Mr. Hall who provided an update on the rideshare mitigation program. Mr. Hall thanked the planning team for setting up the program and Mr. Regan for managing it. He reported a total of 391 rideshare trips over 48 days were taken from the island of Alameda to Jack London Square including the opposite direction with a total cost to WETA in the amount of \$5,600. He added that usage was limited to Monday through Friday and timed to actual departures in the morning and arrivals in the evening.

Mr. Hall said that most of the complaints about the program were heard at the Board meeting where the program was discussed in response to Chair Wunderman adding that WETA provided weekend Alameda Seaplane service during the 10-week rehabilitation project out of necessity with a better schedule than the one offered by the Alameda Oakland service, and as a result, WETA is receiving more frequent requests for weekend Alameda Seaplane service.

Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Gularte to provide a state legislative update to talk about the regional transportation funding measure. Ms. Gularte reported that MTC approved the process to develop enabling legislation to put a regional transportation measure on the ballot as early as November 2026 but that the legislation does not include an expenditure plan. Ms. Gularte noted that California State Senator Scott Wiener sponsored Senate Bill 925, the "spot bill" for the regional transportation measure. She added that the legislation would call for a ballot measure that could be put on the ballot either directly by MTC or via qualified voter initiative.

The Directors thanked the staff for their reports.

Mr. Murphy added that Assemblymember and Transportation Committee Chair Lori Wilson introduced WETA's bill to exempt the procurement of any zero-emission vessels from the state sales tax.

Mr. Murphy invited Operations Analyst Joe Ramey to cover the monthly operations, ridership, and recovery report. Mr. Ramey asked Mr. Hall to address Vice Chair Moyer's question about service disruption complaints before turning it over to Operations & Maintenance Manager Timothy Hanners to talk about vessel maintenance issues.

The Directors noted that there was a big difference between a repair and maintenance issue versus a safety issue and wondered if cancellation reasons were tracked. Mr. Ramey stated that the Swiftly system allowed dispatch to include a note in the system to record service disruption reasons.

Mr. Hanners said that eleven vessels are required to run service Monday through Friday. WETA has six spare vessels; however, five of the six are out of service and cannot run due to unplanned maintenance. He explained that maintenance and repair issues included gearbox failures, main engine shutdowns, and electrical issues. He said that WETA was providing outside resources to Blue & Gold to help speed up the repairs to expedite the return of three of the five vessels. He said that the external resources included Bay Ship & Yacht machinists, the utilization of two different shipyards to assist with repairs that would normally be done at WETA's facilities, and bringing in a specialist to work on electrical issues. He added that the other two vessels required a gearbox replacement and were expected to be out of service for at least one month.

Mr. Ramey stated that most of the service disruptions occurred during the week of January 8 and that the preliminary numbers reflect an on-time performance of 97.2 percent but that the cancellation rate was roughly double the yearly average.

Mr. Hanners stated that WETA was doing a root cause analysis. He said that WETA had a repair plan in place and had a contract with Elliott Bay Design Group to conduct a third-party audit of Blue & Gold's engineering. He added that WETA was reviewing everything from training to staffing levels.

Mr. Hanners said that most of the work was being done under warranty but that there would be costs that were not included in the budget.

Director Dew commented that she had received and appreciated the notifications about the service disruptions and the reason for the disruption.

Chair Wunderman suggested putting maintenance and repair on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Murphy thanked Mr. Hanners and his team for their work. He thanked Blue & Gold for looking into the reliability and service issues and added that Blue & Gold put MV *Bay Monarch* in Richmond service to avoid cancelling a run.

Mr. Murphy asked Transportation Planner Gabriel Chan to provide an update on the ridership. Mr. Chan said ridership increased by 440,000, an increase of approximately 25 percent.

Director Dew asked for a presentation from MTC staff to talk about the long-term viability of the bridges in the Bay Area that was shared with Assemblymember Wilson.

Mr. Murphy provided five written reports and offered to answer questions.

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

Chair Wunderman thanked staff for the reports.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Wunderman requested pulling Item 6e - Authorize the Filing of an Application with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for \$841,000 in Regional Measure 3 Capital Funds from the Consent Calendar for questions.

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2023
- b. Approve WETA's 2024 Legislative Program
- c. Approve Contract Award for the MV Dorado Jet Work and Dry Dock to Marine Group Boat Works, LLC

- d. Authorize the Resolution of Local Support with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for \$3,750,000 in Transit Station Public Charging Capital Grants Program Funds for the Richmond Ferry Terminal EV Charging Infrastructure Project
- e. Item 6e Pulled from Consent Calendar
- f. Authorize Release of a Request for Qualifications for On-Call Civil and Electrical Engineering Consulting Services to Support Development of Shoreside Infrastructure for Ferry System Electrification

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

Director Dew seconded the motion, and the consent calendar carried unanimously.

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Dew, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None. Absent: None.

- e. Authorize the Filing of an Application with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for \$841,000 In Regional Measure 3 Capital Funds

Grants Manager Jennifer Raupach clarified that the \$841,000 was the initial seed funding for preliminary engineering and that WETA was not committed to funding the \$29 million. She added that the plan was to work with MTC to establish a more robust Regional Measure (RM) 3 plan or the \$300 capital program.

Chair Wunderman said that he was under the impression that WETA did not need permission from MTC to access RM 3 funds. Mr. Miller explained that the process of drawing down funds does not indicate that WETA is asking for permission to receive funding but rather following long-standing MTC procedures to facilitate disbursement of funds.

Chief Financial Officer Erin McGrath added that MTC is the oversight entity for the bridge toll funds and has implemented procedures designed to make certain that funds were being spent appropriately and in compliance with the revenue measure that was approved by the voters. She added that MTC was also managing cash flow.

Chair Wunderman said that it was a good idea to be a partner but was concerned about whether the process inhibited WETA's ability to determine its own destiny with the funds that were directed for WETA's operation and capital programs.

Director DelBono said that he felt that prior language was unfair and recalled agreeing to the consultation language but not the approval.

Mr. Miller said that he would work with Mr. Murphy to address the Directors' comments. He added that he recalled drafting the measure and said a main difference between RM 3 and the previous regional transportation funding measures was the removal of the "use it or lose it" provision and the change from MTC approval to in consultation with MTC.

Chair Wunderman added that he was concerned that MTC may add standards for expending revenues if there was a shortage of funds.

Mr. Murphy said that WETA had more flexibility and control than under the previous measure but that he would put a memo together that spells out some clear language about how RM 3 was different from the previous measures. He added that the capital funds required MTC's approval of a five-year plan. He noted that MTC staff has been very flexible with WETA's access to the funds.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-04 approving this item.

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

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

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Dew, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None. Absent: None

7. AMEND AGREEMENT WITH BLUE & GOLD FLEET FOR OPERATION OF ESTUARY WATER SHUTTLE PILOT PROJECT

Mr. Murphy thanked Planning & Development Manager Michael Gougherty, Mr. Hanners, and their teams for their work in implementing WETA's first pilot project.

Mr. Gougherty presented this item recommending amending the agreement with Blue & Gold Fleet for operation of the estuary water shuttle pilot project. He said many potential pilot projects exist and that many methods were available to deliver the range of pilot projects including the private operator request for proposal (RFP) that WETA issued a year ago, project specific RFPs that could be issued in the future, and Executive Director authority to be able to field test new markets that may be difficult to test through traditional transportation demand modeling processes to determine whether demand exists for long-term service.

Mr. Gougherty said that this item represented the last approval needed to move forward in operating the project in partnership with the City of Alameda that would start as early as June 2024 providing between 30 to 40 crossings between Oakland and Alameda on a vessel designed to carry as many bikes as possible across the estuary.

To move the project forward, Mr. Gougherty said that WETA reached out to the private operators on WETA's on-call list but determined that using this model was not going to work as the firms did not have a vessel identified that would be suitable for the service. He said given the timeframe of the project and the need to access WETA's operations and maintenance facility, WETA determined that the best approach for getting the project delivered would be through its existing contract with Blue & Gold with a vessel purchased and provided by the City of Alameda and its partners.

Mr. Gougherty said that other factors indicating that Blue & Gold was best positioned to operate this pilot service, in addition to the location of the maintenance facility, included its in-house maintenance and repair staff, immediate access to crew and backup crews if needed, experience in operating and maintaining boats on behalf of an owner, and the ability to aggressively meet the City of Alameda's start time.

Mr. Gougherty stated that the specific recommendation of the item was to authorize staff to amend the contract with Blue & Gold for an amount up to \$2 million which would be reimbursed by the City of Alameda for up to two years to operate the service.

Mr. Gougherty said that the capacity of the vessel purchased for the pilot project is 48 passengers and expected that to remain roughly the same as the vessel is retrofitted to create more space for bikes and would be operated by two crew members.

Mr. Gougherty invited City of Alameda Senior Transportation Coordinator Rochelle Wheeler to speak as the manager of the water shuttle project. Ms. Wheeler said that there were many entities providing funds including a grant from the Alameda County Transportation Commission, Transportation Fund for Clean Air distributed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the City of Alameda with the rest coming from private entities. She said that two transportation management associations collect revenue from housing and commercial development to help support transportation needs of same developments and from the group the manages Jack London Square.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alameda Chamber & Economic Alliance President and CEO Madlen Saddik, Alameda Transportation Management Association (TMA) Transportation Demand Management Manager Lucy Gigli, Bike East

Bay Co-Executive Director of Mobility Justice Justin Hu-Nguyen, Tim Lewis Communities Director of Forward Planning and Alameda TMA President Mike O'Hara, Ms. Wheeler, Mr. Pat Murphy, Master, Mates & Pilots Regional Representative Sly Hunter spoke in support of amending the Blue & Gold contract for the Oakland-Alameda Estuary water shuttle pilot project.

Mr. Pat Murphy noted that this project offered the opportunity for crew members to get captain operational hours to move up from the deck level that is not often available on the current fleet of vessels.

Mr. Gougherty said that there were no operational constraints to operating the service in response to Director Alba.

The Directors thanked the staff, the City of Alameda, Blue & Gold, and all the partners.

Director DelBono made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-05 approving this item.

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

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Dew, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None. Absent: None.

8. ADJUST FISCAL YEAR 2023/24 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR ALAMEDA MAIN STREET TERMINAL REHABILITATION PROJECT

Ms. McGrath presented this item recommending approval of the FY 2023/24 budget adjustment for the Alameda Main Street Terminal Rehabilitation Project.

Vice Chair Moyer made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-06 approving this item.

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

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

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Dew, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None. Absent: None.

9. WORKING WATERFRONT COALITION UPDATE

Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Lauren Gularte introduced this informational item on the Working Waterfront Coalition and its work as a regional maritime workforce development program to ensure that a pipeline of training skilled workers exists.

Ms. Gularte said the Working Waterfront Coalition was a paid training pathway for individuals from low-income communities or from the reentry population.

Ms. Gularte introduced Working Waterfront Coalition President & CEO Bobby Winston to present a few highlights before turning it over to Project Director Sal Vaca.

Mr. Winston stated that the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) was officially getting underway for obtaining the required homeland security credential. He thanked the Alameda County Probation Department Reentry Services Coordinator Shadeequa Smith and Lao Family Community Development for their support. He said that the web address waterfrontjobs.com has been secured and that business will be under that moniker with databases to track job applicants and list job and internship opportunities. He thanked the leadership of the unions for their support and involvement.

Mr. Vaca shared his presentation on the partnerships, grants received, the Friends of the Port organizational chart, the 2024 timelines, and training sites.

Mr. Vaca asked the Board to consider supporting the program by allowing use of the WETA operations and maintenance facilities for hands-on specialized training, providing ferry rides as orientation for interested individuals to learn more about becoming deckhands, supporting grant and partnership development, and promoting the Working Waterfront Coalition with all contractors and vendors by embedding language in its procurement practices.

The Directors thanked Mr. Winston and Mr. Vaca for their work and said that they would do anything they could to be supportive.

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

10. AGENCY BRANDING

Mr. Hall presented this informational item on agency branding requesting feedback and input from the Board. He said that the idea was to strengthen the San Francisco Bay Ferry Brand as it pertains to staff and how WETA is known across the region.

Staff proposed the following:

- Use the "SF Bay Ferry" brand in nearly all public communication, including with stakeholders.
- Proactively communicate agency identification adjustments to partners and Stakeholders.
- Develop a branding guide for pilot services that reflects potential use of nonbranded Vessels.

Mr. Hall said that he was not aware of anyone expressing resistance to this change.

The Directors supported the transition but wanted confirmation that the emergency response mission not be lost.

Mr. Murphy said that he would think about how to incorporate the emergency response obligation and statutory authority into the SF Bay Ferry brand and not incorporate the day-to-day ferry service into the emergency response brand which was inherited from the statutory authority.

Chair Wunderman said that he did not think it would be a good idea to go through legislation to change the name.

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

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m. with the hopes and prayers that the 49ers bring home the Super Bowl Championship.

- Board Secretary

END