

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

[May 4, 2023]

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair James Wunderman called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair James 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. PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024-2028 FARE PROGRAM

Chair Wunderman stated that WETA was conducting a public hearing concerning the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2028 Fare Program. He noted that the program would define annual fare adjustments for both regular and special event services over a five-year period beginning July 1, 2023. He asked staff to introduce the item before opening the floor to the public.

Transportation Planner Arthi Krubanandh introduced this item with a summary of the program.

Chair Wunderman opened the public hearing to receive comments and asked speakers to clearly state their name and city of residence for the record.

With no further public comments, Chair Wunderman closed the public hearing.

4. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wunderman reported that he has enjoyed his experience riding the ferry from Oakland to San Francisco regularly and rode the special event ferry from Chase Center back to Oakland. He thanked Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall for assisting him with purchasing a ticket through the San Francisco Bay Ferry app.

Chair Wunderman said he felt like he was seeing more people on a regular basis on the return trips and that riding the ferry was the best part of the day and thanked the Blue & Gold Fleet (Blue & Gold) crew for contributing to a positive environment. He said that WETA provides a valuable and reliable service.

5. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Dew reported that she had attended the Highway 37 tolling meeting and that the Solano Transportation Authority (STA) was discussing ferry service from Vallejo to San Rafael. She noted that she had been appointed to the Transportation Subcommittee for the STA.

Director Dew commented that she was in Sacramento for the California Association of Realtors and shared a concern about expansion challenges including a Solano County project that would take three years before a Pacific Gas & Electric connection could be completed.

Director Dew reported that the City of Vallejo had submitted a marina project to Assemblymember Lori Wilson's office but did not have any details about the project. She commented that she had taken the ferry today with 10 people in line waiting to purchase a paper ticket. She said that she was excited to see more cars in the garage but noted that the parking fee had been increased and would discuss the increase with the City of Vallejo.

6. REPORTS OF STAFF

Executive Director Seamus Murphy confirmed the increase in ridership that was observed by the Directors.

Mr. Murphy commended the Blue & Gold crews for circling back to pick up a child who had been left behind on the shoreside and reconnecting that child with their family who were on the vessel.

Mr. Murphy complimented Congressman John Garamendi for doing a fantastic job working on WETA's budget requests and leading the effort to get his colleagues to sign on to those requests. Mr. Murphy said that one of the key requests was for the reconfiguration of the Vallejo Ferry Terminal, which would reduce the need for dredging there. He added that San Francisco Bay Ferry fan Congressman Garamendi recently held his staff retreat on the WETA system.

Mr. Murphy reported that WETA was awarded a grant from Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program in the amount of \$13.8 million to support upgrading electric capacity and commended WETA staff for working on the advocacy front. He said that he received feedback from California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) that WETA's applications continue to rank as some of the program's highest scoring.

Mr. Murphy said that he anticipated a June launch for *Sea Change* that would provide service between Pier 41 and the Downtown Ferry Terminal, adding that it would be the first hydrogen ferry in the world. He said that details for the June launch event would be made available when ready. He said that *Sea Change* was docked at Pier 9 and that he would look for some time to invite the Board for a tour. He said that employers have expressed interest in extending the demonstration longer than the anticipated six months.

Mr. Murphy thanked Government & Regulatory Affairs Manager Lauren Gularte for organizing the tour of the Northern Waterfront in Contra Costa. He said that the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is conducting a ferry study for potential ferry service to Antioch, Hercules, Martinez, and Pittsburgh. He acknowledged Bay Crossings Founder Bobby Winston and Zell & Associates Principal Eric Zell for assistance in organizing the tour. He thanked Chair Wunderman for participating in the tour and meeting the stakeholders.

Chair Wunderman thanked Ms. Gularte for organizing the tour and commented that the cities on the tour were very interested in getting ferry service.

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

Chair Wunderman asked if ridership data trails and wondered if there was more updated data or very late changes that were not reflected on the ridership report. Mr. Murphy commented that the most recent changes have all been positive and staff expects that trend to continue.

Vice Chair Moyer commended staff for the incredible amount of work that she has seen come to fruition during her short time on the Board.

Chair Wunderman asked Mr. Murphy to comment on the future of transportation and fiscal cliff funding. Mr. Murphy stated that WETA was fortunate to be the recipient of Regional Measure 3 (RM3) revenues that could be accessed immediately to help balance WETA's operating budget. He said that other fare revenue dependent agencies were desperate for the state to provide gap funding for the next few years. He said that Senator Scott Weiner is leading the charge to work on solutions that don't impact the general fund.

Chair Wunderman noted that San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) still uses a portion of its operating funds for capital. Mr. Murphy explained that agencies needed to keep their system in a state of good repair in order to operate.

PUBLIC COMMENT

SWITCH Maritime Founder and Chief Executive Officer Pace Ralli expressed his gratitude to WETA and Blue & Gold Fleet for being phenomenal partners and hoped to continue the partnership beyond the six-month demonstration period.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2023
- b. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2023
- c. Item pulled from Consent Calendar by Chair Wunderman
- d. Authorize Submission of an Allocation Request to the California Department of Transportation for FY 2022/23 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Grant Funds
- e. Authorize Release of an Invitation for Bid for Dredging and Marine Construction Services for the Terminal Dredging - Vallejo Project
- f. Authorize Release of a Request for Proposal for the *Bay Breeze* Engine Swap Work
- g. Authorize Release of Two Separate Requests for Proposals for the MV *Lyra* and MV *Intintoli* Dry Dock Work
- h. Authorize Release of a Request for Proposal for the Acquisition of a 28' Work Boat
- i. Authorize Purchase of Insurance Policies for Fiscal Year 2023-24
- j. Item pulled from Consent Calendar by Vice Chair Moyer
- k. Approve Amendment No. 2 to Agreement #22-004 with Pacific Power Group, LLC

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

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

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

The Directors pulled two items from the Consent Calendar for additional discussion:

- c. Approve Transfer of State Transit Assistance funds to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the Blue Ribbon Task Force Action Plan

Chair Wunderman asked if other agencies were transferring funds to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the Blue Ribbon Task Force Action Plan. Mr. Murphy stated that other agencies were proportionately contributing to the plan. He explained that the COVID relief funds that were intended for the plan were distributed to operators in order to position the region to compete for supplemental COVID relief funding. He said that WETA competed and successfully received additional COVID relief funds in the amount of \$26 million.

In response to Vice Chair Moyer, Mr. Murphy confirmed that no restrictions existed for State Transit Assistance funds to be used in this manner.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on item 7c, and there were none.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-10 approving this item.

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

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

- j. Approve Amendment No. 1 to Agreement #21-028 with Pacific Power Group, LLC

Engineering & Maintenance Administrator Jeffery Powell introduced this item recommending approving Amendment No. 1 to Agreement #21-028 with Pacific Power Group, LLC to increase the total contract price from \$1,204,106 to \$1,740,000 and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute the amendment.

Vice Chair Moyer asked for clarification about the significant increase in cost. Mr. Powell explained the reasoning for the unanticipated costs. Operations and Maintenance Manager Timothy Hanners offered to share the itemized breakdown and justification of all the costs with the Board.

The Directors stated that the detailed analysis would be helpful from a process standpoint.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments on item 7j, and there were none.

Director DelBono made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-13 approving this item.

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

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

8. ADOPT WETA FARE POLICY AND FISCAL YEAR 2024-28 FARE PROGRAM

Transportation Planner Arthi Krubanandh introduced this item recommending adopting the WETA Fare Policy and the Fiscal Year 2024-28 Fare Program, consistent with the WETA Fare Policy and authorize the Executive Director to take any actions necessary to implement the program.

Ms. Krubanandh shared her presentation on the fare policy and program noting that the fare program was developed based on the fare policy.

Ms. Krubanandh said that the public recognized and appreciated the overall reduction in fares. Chair Wunderman commented that special event fares were expensive for low-income riders and was interested in doing something if the technology and capability existed in the future. Principal Planner Michael Gougherty addressed the affordability issue and shared WETA's efforts to apply a discount potentially through the Clipper START program.

The Directors spoke in support of the fare increase to support growing the ferry system, discounts on special event fares, and offered suggestions for increasing Clipper usage.

Mr. Murphy suggested adding a bullet to the fare policy focusing on opportunities to provide a means-based discount for special event fares in response to comments from Director Dew and others.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Seamless Bay Area Advocacy Director Adina Levin sent a letter supporting the proposed fare policy.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-15 with the following amendments under Special Events:

- Explore opportunities to partner with special event hosts in offering discount programs to serve disadvantaged communities.
- Evaluate the potential of fare ticketing systems in offering low-income discount products.

and Resolution 2023-16 approving this item.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments, and there were none.
Director DelBono seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

9. APPROVE CONTRACT AWARD TO KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. FOR VALLEJO FERRY TERMINAL RECONFIGURATION PROJECT, ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND PERMITTING SERVICES

Ms. Krubanandh presented this item recommending approving contract award to Kimley-Horn for the Environmental and Permitting Services to support the Vallejo Ferry Terminal Reconfiguration Project for a total amount not to exceed \$568,000. Prior to her presentation, Ms. Krubanandh noted a correction in the fiscal impact section in the amount of \$18,000.

Ms. Krubanandh noted that Kimley-Horn had one Small Business Enterprise (SBE) subcontractor with 16 percent participation.

Government and Regulatory Affairs Specialist Terence Candell provided more details about Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation for this project.

Director Alba made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-17 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.

10. AWARD CONTRACTS FOR ON-CALL PILOT AND EMERGENCY FERRY SERVICES AND OPERATIONS TO PROPSF, LLC AND BLUE & GOLD FLEET, LP

Planning and Development Manager Kevin Connolly presented this item recommending awarding contracts for on-call pilot and emergency ferry services and operations to PROPSF, LLC (PROPSF) and Blue & Gold Fleet, LP (Blue & Gold Fleet) with terms of up to five years and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute agreements for these on-call services.

Mr. Murphy said that he was surprised that WETA had only received two proposals as the on-call pilot and emergency ferry services and operations program was a path WETA created to enable private operators to do business with WETA.

Director DelBono commented that PROPSF and Blue & Gold have set a high standard to be competitive in the process.

Mr. Connolly said that a pilot service would be revealed in June and that the on-call emergency ferry services were created to accelerate the possibility of contracting with operators in the instance of an emergency in response to Director Dew. He added that future pilots and how WETA handled emergency services would be part of the business plan.

Director Dew commented on various conversations she has had with requests and concerns about pilot services and emergency needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Inlandboatmen's Union Regional Director Robert Estrada credited Mr. Murphy for involving labor by inviting Mr. Estrada to Mavrik Marine in La Conner, WA to see the vessels being constructed which provided an opportunity for extensive discussion of the plans.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-18 approving this item.

Vice Chair Moyer seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously.

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

11. DRAFT FINAL WETA ZERO EMISSIONS PLAN

Senior Planner/Project Manager Chad Mason and Maintenance & Operations & Maintenance Manager Timothy Hanners presented this informational item and shared their presentation on updates to the two-year effort of the draft final WETA zero emissions plan. They thanked consultants Arup, Aurora Marine Design, Elliott Bay Design Group, and Liftech Consultants Inc. for their help in this effort. Mr. Mason presented the consumption needs, feasibility, cost, implementation, and other shoreside considerations, and Mr. Hanners presented information related to vessels.

Mr. Mason stated that the California Energy Commission (CEC) process developed a blueprint for WETA to transition to zero-emission technology and was instrumental in receiving the TIRCP grant award that would fund enhanced charging capacity to WETA terminals including the Downtown San Francisco terminal.

Mr. Mason said that WETA is actively engaged with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Alameda Municipal Power, and the Port of San Francisco (Port of SF) to move these projects forward. Applications have been submitted to the SFPUC and Alameda Municipal Power.

Mr. Hanners said that battery life is extended by more frequent charging minimizing total battery drain and that charging connection strategy has not yet been determined. He remarked that studies show that the overall cost of having an electric fleet and paying for electricity is lower than diesel but that more work needed to be done, adding that he expected maintenance and capital costs to be reduced.

Mr. Mason said that the plan would be built into the business plan and will be included in the RM3 five-year plan that would be presented in June.

Director Alba commented that WETA should keep in mind that technology is rapidly evolving and that electricity may not always flow and how that might affect operations and battery capacity.

Ms. Gularte said that the California Transit Association (CTA) was working on Assembly Bill 463 which would prioritize power use and consumption to transit during brownouts or blackouts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Berkeley resident Kelly Hammargren said that this may help with climate, but new technologies may create other damage.

Mr. Ralli said that he was supportive of electric, hydrogen, and other fuel types with the objective of achieving zero emissions.

Mr. Murphy thanked and commended Mr. Mason and Mr. Hanners for their presentation. He reminded the Board about accessing resources including the BEACN group presentation on battery choices that would have the least impact from a human rights, mineral availability, and sustainability standpoint.

12. REVIEW PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2023/24 BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE

Mr. Murphy introduced the item stating that the budget would see increases over the prior year and would have looked very different without RM3.

Chief Financial Officer Erin McGrath presented this informational item and shared her presentation on the proposed fiscal year 2023/24 budget and salary schedule.

The Directors thanked Ms. McGrath for her report and presentation.

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

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No further public comments were shared.

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END