

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

[November 2, 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 1:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Wunderman, Vice Chair Monique Moyer, 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 reported that he had a good conversation about the future of California transit and different funding opportunities with California State Transportation Agency Secretary Toks Omishakin and Caltrans District 4 Director Dina El-Tawansy. He said that there were approximately 50 to 60 attendees at the event and that Secretary Omishakin gave a nice talk and presentation that included a debate about the correct pronunciation of "WETA". He thanked Bay Area Council Vice President of Public Policy Emily Loper for organizing the event and said that the slide presentation would be posted on the Bay Area Council website.

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Vice Chair Moyer said that she had an opportunity to visit the South San Francisco Ferry Terminal and talked with a working mom who used the service and gave the ferry service strong reviews but said that more service and more flexibility in the service would be great. Vice Chair Moyer noted the availability of the shuttle and the bus service in South San Francisco and hoped that that the service would continue to grow.

Chair Wunderman commented that the Bay Area Council held their recent Board meeting at Genentech in South San Francisco and stated that he thought that over time there would be an increase in ridership as Genentech was bringing people back to the office.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Executive Director Seamus Murphy said that WETA has done well in the discretionary grant programs under Secretary Omishakin and thanked the Bay Area Council for organizing the event adding that he believed that WETA is the only agency to get a perfect score for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP).

Mr. Murphy introduced Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Lauren Gularte and Tony Heeter of Blue & Gold Fleet (Blue & Gold) to share their presentation and provide an overview about the Bay Ferry VI exercise. Ms. Gularte said that the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District

secured the grant and led the planning effort for the regional maritime focused, active threat full-scale exercise.

Ms. Gularte stated that the exercise took place over a period of four days and that WETA provided a vessel, staff and crews for Days 3 (active shooter underway boarding) and 4 (mass casualty event requiring evacuation testing Vessel Mutual Aid Plan (VMAP)). She said that 619 personnel, 39 law enforcement, and 51 agencies participated. She noted that WETA and Blue & Gold conducted and hosted several training sessions for crew and law enforcement partners in the months leading up to the exercise. She recognized Blue & Gold for their work in coordinating the training sessions at little cost to the agency and without disrupting transit services.

Director DelBono commented that City of Alameda fire agencies asked for training opportunities to get fire equipment on board the ferries.

The Directors thanked the staff for the presentation and pictures and for their participation and efforts in planning the exercise.

Mr. Murphy shared a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) presentation in preparation for a regional transportation measure. He said the measure would be based on Plan Bay Area 2050 infrastructure project goals. He said that MTC conducted an opt in survey with the public about what their priorities would be for a regional transportation measure. MTC plans to secure legislative approval to put a measure on the November 2026 ballot that is expected to cover at least five counties and possibly nine counties.

Mr. Murphy clarified that this measure would be separate from the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) measure for an affordable housing bond in response to Chair Wunderman.

Chair Wunderman remarked that he saw other polls which showed record low support for public transportation and that there was talk about consolidation. Mr. Murphy stated that he thinks the public cares about the outcomes and not the process to get there or about consolidation as long as the outcomes create a difference in regular day-to-day life.

Chair Wunderman suggested having early conversations with Congress for federal transportation funding because a regional measure would be more amenable to the public when their money is federally matched.

Mr. Murphy thanked Chair Wunderman for his suggestion and introduced Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall to provide an update on the impacts of the Main Street Ferry Terminal closure since October 23 and the rideshare voucher program. Mr. Murphy said that 14 of the 33 distributed vouchers have been used for a total of 61 rides and thanked Customer Experience Specialist Rafael Regan for the day-to-day management of the rideshare program.

Mr. Murphy thanked Mr. Hall for his report and introduced Transportation Planner Gabriel Chan who was participating remotely to provide the monthly operations, ridership, and recovery report. Mr. Chan said that the dip in ridership was due to seasonal fluctuations. In response to Chair Wunderman, Mr. Chan noted that Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Caltrain do not experience the seasonal fluctuations in ridership to the same degree as WETA. Mr. Murphy added that WETA's dependence on recreational ridership is more impacted by the season and was exploring ways to increase recreational ridership. Operations Analyst Joe Ramey provided an on-time performance and reliability update.

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

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2023

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

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

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

7. OAKLAND ESTUARY WATER SHUTTLE PILOT SERVICE PROJECT AGREEMENT

Planning and Development Manager Kevin Connolly presented this item remotely requesting authorization to enter into a project agreement with the City of Alameda by which WETA will serve as operator for a two-year pilot water shuttle service linking the cities of Alameda and Oakland.

Mr. Connolly said that the Oakland Estuary service was expected to be free and operate throughout the day through a grant secured by the County Transportation Commission (CTC). He explained that neither of WETA's pre-qualified on-call pilot program operators—Blue & Gold and PROP—had a vessel suitable for the service. He said that Big Yellow Boat, LLC, which is wholly owned by the Alameda Transportation Management Association (TMA) volunteered to purchase a vessel tailored to the service.

Mr. Connolly said that service is targeted to begin in May or June of next year. If the Board approves the project agreement, the next step is for staff to return to the Board with a proposed amendment to WETA's existing contract with Blue & Gold to operate this pilot service.

Mr. Connolly introduced City of Alameda Senior Transportation Planner Rochelle Wheeler and real estate developer and Alameda TMA President and Chairman Mike O'Hara to address the Board.

Ms. Wheeler said that the City of Alameda would monitor the ridership and evaluate the service during the two-year pilot.

Mr. O'Hara thanked Mr. Connolly and Operations and Maintenance Manager Timothy Hanners for their expertise. He said that he hoped funding would continue once grant funds have been expended.

Ms. Wheeler and Mr. O'Hara thanked the Board for their leadership and urged the Board to approve this agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alex Kryska of PROP spoke in support of the service and expressed his disappointment about the lack of recognition of PROP's efforts to conceive of and support the development of the project and PROP's relevant experience for operating the service.

Ms. Loper voiced her strong support for moving forward with the partnership and the CTC.

Bike East Bay co-Executive Director of Mobility Justice Justin Hu-Nguyen, Port of Oakland Acting Government Affairs Manager Diego Gonzalez, Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance President & CEO Madlen Saddik, and Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific Regional Director Robert Estrada spoke in support of the project.

Chair Wunderman recognized the letter of support from Bike Walk Alameda.

Chair Wunderman acknowledged the comments and the competitive environment and stated that he hoped more opportunities would be available in the future and that this could be a model for the future. He asked Mr. Murphy to provide some background on the selection process.

Mr. Murphy stated that the item being presented was requesting authorization to enter into an agreement with the City of Alameda and that the final selection of the operator would be a subsequent Board action and asked Mr. Connolly to address the comments.

Mr. Connolly stated that WETA plans to recommend, as part of a future item that will be presented to the Board, that Blue & Gold operate this service based on their staffing availability, which is critical for a one-vessel service. He added that this service would be used as a potential training ground for new captains and that Blue & Gold has a much deeper level of expertise on vessel maintenance.

Director DelBono recognized that this small boat service didn't gain much traction earlier in COVID but thinks that the Board is interested in moving forward. He thanked PROP for their work with organized labor.

Mr. Connolly said that the schedule was still being worked out and that potential sponsors were still in discussions. He said that the service will go from the Fifth Street dock (Target dock) to the Broadway dock in Oakland owned by the Port of Oakland in response to Director DelBono.

Mr. Hanners said that the vessel is a diesel with two outboard gas engines with the ability to easily convert to all-electric in response to Vice Chair Moyer.

Vice Chair Moyer expressed her excitement about the service and remarked that WETA has made an investment in small craft. She said that she was disappointed that WETA didn't leverage its partnerships to be more inclusive and lower the barriers to entry.

Director Dew said that she was looking at this service as a potential roadmap for other pilot projects, having learned that public private partnerships are a way to get exciting work done.

Ms. Wheeler addressed the docking options in response to the Directors.

The Directors expressed their appreciation of Blue & Gold and hoped to create more opportunities for more competition and involvement from others.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-42 approving this item.

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

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

8. AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO BAY SHIP & YACHT CO. FOR THE BAY BREEZE ENGINE REBUILD AND REPLACE WORK

Engineering and Maintenance Administrator Jeffery Powell presented this item recommending award of a contract to Bay Ship & Yacht Co. (Bay Ship & Yacht) in the amount of \$142,000 for *Bay Breeze* Engine Rebuild and Replace (R&R) Work.

Vice Chair Moyer made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-43 approving this item.

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

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

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

9. AUTHORIZE RELEASE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR WEBSITE REDESIGN PROJECT

Digital Communications Specialist Alexis Matsui presented this item requesting authorizing a release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Website Redesign Project. She shared her presentation that included the areas for potential improvement, the goals for the redesign, and the timeline for the project.

Mr. Hall said that he had reached out to other transit agencies who were redesigning their websites. He indicated that WETA was not committed to spending \$500,000 and hoped that the bids would come in much lower in response to Chair Wunderman.

Mr. Hall said it was worth having a broader conversation with the Board and stakeholders about the branding for the agency and the service. Mr. Murphy thought that the branding objectives could be accomplished without changing the WETA name or the statute.

The Directors asked for trip planning tools, transit connections and services, and information on where to purchase tickets.

Vice Chair Moyer commented that the New York Metro website was the gold standard in transportation websites and anything that gets WETA closer to that would be great.

Director Dew made a motion approving this item.

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

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

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

10. FISCAL YEAR 2024 MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Mr. Hall introduced this informational item on the focus and strategic objectives of the fiscal year 2024 marketing campaign. He turned it over to MacKenzie Communications Vice President Sarah Eggerman who shared her presentation on the integrated marketing approach leveraging a balanced mix of advertising, events, content marketing, and PR tactics. She shared the theme of the marketing campaign, "Now Departing from the Ordinary".

Mr. Hall closed the presentation with the budget and timing of the campaign.

Mr. Hall said that the community outreach program is being led by Next Steps Marketing and that outreach to the Asian Pacific Island communities has been through participation in community events. In response to Director DelBono's question regarding images of riders, Mr. Hall said that the ad mock-ups were using pre-existing imagery and that WETA will be getting additional images in the future that reflect the diversity of WETA's ridership.

Chair Wunderman thanked the team for the presentation.

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

11. PROPOSED VESSEL NAMING PRINCIPLES

Mr. Hall presented this informational item on the proposed vessel naming principles. He said that staff was seeking Board and public input on the principles for developing a vessel naming policy.

The Directors expressed an interest in deciding on the final names and participating in engaging local youth.

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

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No further public comments were shared.

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

- Board Secretary

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