

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

[June 13, 2024]

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 1:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair James Wunderman, 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 said that he is continuing to see long lines and few empty seats on his ferry rides.

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Alba shared that she was excited to see and learn about the electric technology being implemented in Stockholm and Copenhagen.

Director DelBono thanked Director Alba and Executive Director Seamus Murphy for arranging the trip to Stockholm and Sweden. He said that the trip was very informative and a great experience.

Director DelBono said that with festival season starting, he put Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall in touch with the North Beach Festival committee to advertise the ferry and commented that festivals were a great way to target people and recreational ferry riders.

Director Dew reported that she attended the 31st Annual Visit Vallejo's Board of Directors Installation and Tourism Luncheon where Mr. Murphy was the keynote speaker and a Vallejo City Council meeting where staff gave an update on the Vallejo Ferry Terminal Reconfiguration Project. She added that the Vallejo Passenger Rail Study was completed and presented to the Vallejo City Council noting that the study found that passenger rail service is feasible from the Napa Junction to the Vallejo Ferry Terminal.

Chair Wunderman thanked Director Alba and Director DelBono for taking the trip and expressed his excitement about the advancements in technology.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Mr. Murphy announced that the *Sea Change*, which is the first commercial maritime vessel powered by hydrogen fuel cells, had received the United States Coast Guard (USCG) certification to operate passenger service and is ready for the demonstration project beginning with a three-day a week service after a launch event.

Mr. Murphy acknowledged the work of Blue & Gold Fleet for training crews to operate the vessel and ensuring that the vessel is passenger ready. He said that additional crew training would be required to operate the vessel seven days a week.

Mr. Murphy congratulated SWITCH Maritime, the owner of *Sea Change*, for their dedication in pushing the project forward and the USCG for their efforts to get the vessel operational the first of its kind in the Bay Area. He thanked Chair Wunderman for his comments and for recognizing everyone involved with a project during a ceremony onboard the vessel.

Mr. Murphy introduced Senior Planner/Project Manager Arthi Krubanandh to provide an update on the status of the Vallejo Ferry Terminal Reconfiguration Project.

Director Dew commented that a council member had expressed a desire for an overhang to shelter riders waiting for the ferry from the rain. Mr. Murphy stated that the proposed terminal would have more room to queue on the ramp. He introduced Public Information and Marketing Manager Thomas Hall to provide an update on the Oakland Ferry Fest.

Mr. Hall shared his presentation including photos from the Ferry Fest held on June 1. He noted that Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao has been supportive of the ferry service and was in attendance. Mr. Hall estimated that there were approximately 2,000 attendees and to build awareness and engage with the community, SF Bay Ferry provided free ferry rides. He said WETA's outreach partner, Next Steps Marketing, ran an informal survey and found that many attendees were from Oakland followed by Berkeley.

Mr. Hall stated that WETA was planning a Ferry Fest in Vallejo in 2025 and in Alameda at Seaplane in 2026. He acknowledged Customer Experience Specialist Rafael Regan and Next Steps Marketing for getting everything planned and organized, Digital Communications Specialist Alexis Matsui for all the design work and photography, and Government and Regulatory Affairs Specialist Terence Candell for managing the Mayor and staff.

Mr. Murphy thanked Mr. Hall and his team for their great work in building awareness among the community.

Mr. Murphy shared his thoughts about the trip to Stockholm and Copenhagen highlighting the importance of networking with companies like Candela, Navier, and Artemis Technologies and how their technology might be of benefit and incorporated into SF Bay Ferry in the future. He noted that Pilots Committee member Director DeBono was there to learn about maritime innovations to be considered for a future demonstration project.

Mr. Murphy said that Wärtsilä is exploring battery technology and introduced him to Stockholm-based Echandia whose lithium-titanium-oxide (LTO) batteries are being evaluated for potential use on SF Bay Ferry are being used in the Copenhagen ferry system.

Mr. Murphy noted the earmark request for the Treasure Island Service grid connection which is one of the final investments needed for Phase 1 of the Rapid Electric Emission-Free Ferry (REEF) Program was submitted by both Senators, and once approved, the project will be part of the federal appropriations package which would make it three years in a row. He introduced Operations Analyst Joe Ramey and Transportation Planner Gabriel Chan to present the ridership and recovery report.

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

Director Alba expressed her appreciation for work on all the outreach stakeholder engagement and the engagement with the children.

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

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2024
- b. Approve FY 2025-2027 Title VI Program
- c. Authorize Release of a Request for Proposal for Environmental Review Services for the Oakland and Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal Modernization Projects
- d. Approve Amendment No. 1 to Agreement #23-026 with HamiltonJet, Inc.
- e. Award Contract for MV *Argo* Repairs and Dry Dock to Bay Ship & Yacht Co.
- f. Award On-Call Civil and Electrical Engineering Contracts to Support Development of Shoreside Infrastructure for Ferry System Electrification

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

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

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

7. APPROVE A REVISION TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO PROVIDE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WITH THE AUTHORITY TO ISSUE SOLICITATIONS

Mr. Murphy presented this item recommending approving a revision to the Administrative Code to provide the Executive Director with the authority to issue Request for Proposals, Request for Qualifications, and Invitation for Bids.

Mr. Murphy stated that the Administrative Code was outdated and needed to be updated for best practices. He said that a comprehensive set of changes has been considered but realizes that it is difficult to complete all at once so has decided to piecemeal some of the changes.

Mr. Murphy commented that preparing agenda items for solicitations takes a lot of staff time but that the typical practice of public agencies is to release solicitations for procurements consistent with the Board-approved budget where the results of the solicitations will be brought back to the Board. With nothing further to be added by WETA Attorney Steven Miller of Hanson Bridgett LLP, Mr. Murphy recommended that the Board adopt a revision to the Administrative Code to provide the Executive Director with the authority to issue solicitations.

Chair Wunderman asked if a comprehensive review of the Administrative Code had been discussed as a project. Mr. Murphy said the goal was to modernize and update practices more consistent with industry standards and that future changes to be considered would be packaged in groups with common themes.

Chair Wunderman stated that the role of the Board is to be strategic and provide oversight and felt that the issuance of a solicitation did not rise to that level as the final product would eventually be brought back to the Board.

Director Dew made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-25 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, Wunderman. Nays: None. Absent: Moyer.

8. APPROVE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024/25 BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE AND RELATED RESOLUTIONS

Chief Financial Officer Erin McGrath presented this item recommending approving the fiscal year 2024/25 budget and salary schedule and adopting the related resolutions as follows:

1. Resolution 2024-26 approving adoption of the FY 2024/25 budget and salary schedule, and delegating investment authority to the Chief Financial Officer
2. Resolution 2024-27 authorizing the request of \$7,249,000 in Regional Measure 1 (RM1), \$15,866,227 in Regional Measure 2 (RM2), and \$34,489,938 in Regional Measure 3 (RM3) funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).
3. Resolution 2024-28 approving a project list that includes Water Jet Equipment and authorize other actions necessary to receive funds from the FY 2024/25 California State of Good Repair (SGR) Program.
4. Resolution 2024-29 authorizing the execution of documents related to the drawdown of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds.

Ms. McGrath noted two changes from May's presentation – a change to the cost of living adjustment in the amount of \$31,000 and adding the Oakland Terminal Modernization project to the current fiscal year at a cost of \$550,000.

Director Alba made a motion to consider Resolution Nos. 2024-26, 2024-27, 2024-28, 2024-29 as a package.

Director DelBono seconded the motion to consider the resolutions as a package.

Chair Wunderman said that he appreciated mention of the development of the maritime industry as an objective and hope that would attract the attention of the maritime industry when determining where to locate facilities.

Director DelBono raised concerns about attracting staff due to setting certain salaries. Mr. Murphy stated that attracting talent has not been an issue for current positions that were recently filled and those on active recruitment.

Chair Wunderman asked for clarification about the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) determination on funding. Ms. McGrath stated that statutory language identifies how funding is divided based on the anticipated revenue. Ms. McGrath asked Mr. Miller if he had anything to add. Mr. Miller said that he would have to do some research and report back. Ms. McGrath said that she would reach out to the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) and MTC in response to Chair Wunderman's question.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Northern California Carpenters Training Trust Fund Executive Director Scott Lewis, Nor Cal Carpenters Pile Drivers Local Union 34 Josh Garcia, and Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU) Marina Secchitano spoke in support of reviving the maritime industry.

Director Alba made a motion to adopt Resolution Nos. 2024-26, 2024-27, 2024-28, 2024-29 approving this item.

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

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

Awaiting the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) Representative, Chair Wunderman moved Item 10 – Maintenance System Audit ahead of Item 9 – Contra Costa Transportation Authority Expanded Ferry Service Feasibility Study.

9. MAINTENANCE SYSTEM AUDIT

Engineering and Maintenance Administrator Jeffery Powell present this information item on the maintenance system audit and introduced Elliott Bay Design Group Senior Naval Architect and Project Manager Theresa Fielding to explain the maintenance audit process. Ms. Fielding stated that the audit did not find any red flags.

Mr. Powell closed the presentation by addressing the recommendations and the structured approach to create an action plan and prioritize the items based on value, efficiency, and compliance enforcement.

Chair Wunderman expressed his concerns about the various issues faced by the different classes of vessels and the need for an assessment of the problem level.

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

Chair Wunderman thanked Mr. Powell for his report and asked that a follow up discussion on the progress be presented in several months.

10. CONTRA COSTA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CCTA) EXPANDED FERRY SERVICE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. Chan introduced this information item that examined the feasibility of expanded ferry service across the county. He said that it was a joint effort between the CCTA, the cities of Hercules, Martinez, Pittsburg, and Antioch, and WETA. He invited CCTA Mobility Programs Director Ying Smith to share her presentation on the overview of the project, the approaches and assumptions, ferry feasibility evaluation, operating and capital costs, stakeholder engagement, and next steps.

Planning and Development Manager noted that a similar study was performed in 2015 that had very similar conclusions. He said that significant obstacles exist in implementing services specifically related to travel time and water depth. He stated that WETA was committed by the Business Plan to periodically restudy projects where there is interest, identifying constraints and creating a path forward to overcome them. He said that the WETA Pilot Program offers an opportunity to test new technologies and emerging markets on a limited term with limited investment.

Mr. Gougherty stated that Martinez has expressed interest in the pilot project, and the next step is to determine the type of technology to overcome some of the constraints.

Chair Wunderman asked how Martinez was selected. Ms. Smith stated that Martinez showed a lot of interest and asked many questions to position it as the front runner.

The Directors discussed the need to target different populations and consider new markets in gathering data. Director Alba expressed her concern about the cost of building a temporary terminal and noted the minimal dredging efforts required in Martinez compared to other locations.

The Directors thanked the team for the high-level analysis but acknowledged the need for more details to ensure the success of the pilot program.

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 2:54 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END