

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

(April 1, 2021)

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority met in regular session via videoconference consistent with California Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20 to ensure social distancing and help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair James Wunderman called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. He welcomed directors, staff, and meeting guests and noted that the meeting was being recorded. Chair Wunderman advised guests about offering public comment and how guests could sign up to speak throughout the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Wunderman, Director Jessica Alba, Director Jeffrey DelBono, Director Anthony Intintoli, and Director Monique Moyer were in attendance.

3. PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2022 PANDEMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM

The purpose of this item was to conduct a formal public hearing to receive comments on the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Pandemic Recovery Program (Program). The Program proposes to expand service outside of peak periods and reduce fares throughout the WETA system for a period of one year to attract new and former riders back to the ferry. The public hearing follows a one-month public engagement effort by staff that yielded broad participation and comments from over 100 members of the public.

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

4. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wunderman said that the Bay Area Council had held its Washington, DC week and was able to meet with almost every member Congress in the Bay Area as well as Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg where the importance of water transit was discussed. Executive Director Seamus Murphy was able to participate in several of the meetings.

He remarked that a couple of days later President Joe Biden had unveiled the American Jobs Plan, a \$2 trillion infrastructure package which includes billions of dollars for transportation infrastructure and clean energy and said that there is a lot of follow up work including how to pay for all of it.

Chair Wunderman commented that it was not evident from the WETA website that the agency operates San Francisco Bay Ferry service and asked staff to look for ways to make it easier for people to navigate to information about the service.

5. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Director Intintoli reported that he had attended a meeting of the Government Affairs Committee of the Vallejo Chamber where Congressman Mike Thompson made a presentation indicating that there is money in the infrastructure package for ferries and electrification.

Director Moyer wanted to take a moment to recognize the passing of Anne Halsted for her contributions to public service. Ms. Halsted was a civic leader who served on many government commissions and community committees.

Director Moyer made a motion to adjourn today's meeting in Ms. Halsted's honor.

Chair Wunderman seconded the motion and the item passed unanimously.

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Intintoli, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None.

Director Alba noted that transit workers were prioritized into the essential work category to receive vaccinations and that the American Jobs Plan included a focus on climate change and equity.

6. REPORTS OF STAFF

Mr. Murphy invited WETA General Counsel Madeline Chun from Hanson Bridgett LLP to provide a summary of the proposed decision by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) administrative law judge on the application to amend the certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) filed by PROP SF, LLC (PROP SF). Ms. Chun said that details about what is meant by current service were not provided in response to Chair Wunderman.

Chair Wunderman commented that private carriers can play an important role in creating more water transit and asked if anyone from PROP SF was in attendance to comment.

PROP SF Alex Kryska agreed that the decision made overall sense and that the intent was to find ways to build water transit and help augment service.

Mr. Murphy reported on items related to the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (Task Force): 1) over half of Blue & Gold Fleet's (Blue & Gold) frontline staff have received at least one vaccination shot, 2) the need to explore increase transit capacity in coordination with other transit operators, and 3) Assembly Bill 629 (Chiu) San Francisco Bay Area: public transportation which is intended to streamline the Bay Area's transit systems and simplify the rider experience.

Mr. Murphy said that WETA had received the recommended \$13.5 million from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and that \$1.7 billion was expected for the region from the American Rescue Plan that was approved by Congress.

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

Planning & Development Manager Kevin Connolly provided an update on the Monthly Ridership and Recovery Report. Mr. Connolly reported that there was a strong increase in ridership correlated with the weather and the opening up of the economy putting a strain on capacity. He said that capacity has been increased slightly with the warmer weather with an adjustment to account for the outdoor seating. He noted that the capacity issues were experienced pre-pandemic on normal days and offered to answer any questions.

Director Alba asked if WETA was planning to increase capacity or add extra vessels. Mr. Connolly said increasing capacity would be the ultimate solution; however, in the meantime, a backup vessel

is in place for one of the two impacted departures. Mr. Murphy noted that transit agency general managers were going to meet to discuss capacity issues at a regional level that are consistent across all modes.

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

Chair Wunderman complimented staff for updating the Executive Director's report to a shortened, more readable format.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director DelBono made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Board Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2021
- b. Authorize Submission of an Allocation Request to the California Department of Transportation for FY 2020/21 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Grant Funds

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

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

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Intintoli, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None.

8. OVERVIEW OF 2021 ONBOARD RIDERSHIP SURVEY

Transportation Planner Taylor Rutsch presented this informational item and shared his presentation summarizing the preliminary results from the February 2021 onboard survey of current WETA riders. He reported that 267 surveys provided in English, Spanish, and simplified Chinese were completed between the three routes and that a full, detailed report would be posted online.

Director DelBono said that he has been riding the ferry and that the report reinforced what he was hearing.

Chair Wunderman said with all the changes happening to consider doing an annual survey to be better prepared for whatever comes.

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

9. ADOPT FISCAL YEAR 2022 PANDEMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM

Senior Planner/Project Manager Michael Gougherty introduced this item recommending adopting the Fiscal Year 2022 Pandemic Recovery Program (Program) and authorizing the Executive director to take related actions necessary to implement the Program. He shared his presentation stating that the Program was a compilation of efforts from Operations, Planning & Development, and Public Information & Marketing.

Mr. Gougherty provided an overview of the Program outlining the goals and challenges of the Program. He reminded the Board that the thirteen core principles that were adopted at the February meeting were used by staff to develop the proposed program, highlighted a few of the service and fare changes, and focused on revisions to the Program based on public feedback.

Mr. Gougherty invited Public Information & Marketing Manager Thomas Hall to provide a summary on public outreach efforts and marketing campaign and Transportation Planner Arthi Krubanandh to provide detailed information about the virtual open house and the public comments received.

Mr. Gougherty wrapped up the presentation by noting the exciting addition of the Seaplane Lagoon resulting in a new service and reduced travel times with the implementation of the Seaplane Shift.

Chair Wunderman congratulated and thanked staff for the great presentation and thorough report. The Directors commended the Board and staff on the item. Director Intintoli expressed concern that no comments regarding the Vallejo monthly pass were not received. Mr. Murphy said that there would be opportunities to make changes and be responsive to the riders.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richmond resident Tod Kong supported the Program especially the midday and weekend addition to the Richmond ferry schedule.

The Directors thanked staff for listening to the values of the Board and of the community.

Mr. Connolly confirmed that with some exceptions, the Program would start in July with the start of the fiscal year.

Director Alba made a motion to approve the item.

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

Yeas: Alba, DelBono, Intintoli, Moyer, Wunderman. Nays: None.

10. OVERVIEW OF CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD'S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMERCIAL HARBOR CRAFT REGULATIONS AND WETA'S ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE PATHWAY PLAN

Program Manager Lauren Gularte introduced this informational item providing an overview of the California Air Resources Board's proposed amendments to the commercial harbor craft regulations and WETA's alternative compliance pathway plan.

Ms. Gularte provided an overview of the new vessel requirements and how the new regulations would affect the current WETA fleet. Operations & Maintenance Manager Tim Hanners offered WETA's alternative compliance pathway and funding opportunities, and Senior Planner/Project Manager Chad Mason provided an overview of the shoreside infrastructure study.

Mr. Murphy provided a timeline of future actions required over the next year.

Chair Wunderman stated as in past that WETA should be the trendsetter and should be moving in the direction of exploring cleaner vessels. He said that WETA looked at different types of zero-emission vessels including electric, hydrogen, and fuel cell in the past and the availability and viability of the options and it was determined that the commercially available tier 4 engines were the best option.

Director DelBono left the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Director Alba thanked staff for putting together a concise and informative presentation and wanted to make certain that WETA remained ahead of replacement funding opportunities.

Mr. Hanners said that the installation of the diesel particulate filter (DPF) would result in a reduction of passengers, and Mr. Mason said he anticipated getting into the subsequent phases of the shoreside infrastructure study within the timeframe outlined in response to Director Alba.

Director Moyer commented that it was very challenging time and cost wise bringing shoreside power to the James R. Herman Cruise Terminal at Pier 27. She applauded staff for their creativity and ingenuity in looking or alternative solutions for helping to address the overall global climate issues and suggested investing in environmental partnerships.

Director Intintoli said the regulations threaten the ability to run a service of any length and asked about funds from Regional Measure 3 (RM3). Mr. Murphy stated that RM3 funds could be used if those funds became available but that using them to comply with CARB regulations would limit the agency's ability to expand and improve service.

Chair Wunderman stated that the U.S. government needs to help the maritime industry more broadly if the industry was contributing to greenhouse gas and particulate matter pollution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kelly Hammargren said that WETA must move to the new technology of electric to exist in the future.

Chair Wunderman noted that the demand for ferry service was growing leading up to the pandemic and that WETA has the most modern, cleanest fleet in the U.S.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No further public comments were shared.

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting in honor of Anne Halsted at 4:12 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END