

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

(April 7, 2022)

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority met in regular session at WETA Central Bay Operations & Maintenance Facility at 670 W Hornet Ave, Alameda, CA and via videoconference consistent with AB 361 as codified in Government Code Section 54953.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Chair James Wunderman, Vice Chair Monique Moyer, Director Jessica Alba, and Director Anthony Intintoli 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.

He noted that WETA would be holding a public hearing on the extension of the Fiscal Year 2022 Pandemic Recovery Program later in the meeting, in conjunction with the presentation of the item, before considering adoption of the program consistent with its outreach materials.

3. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wunderman commented that companies have begun to stipulate that their employees return to the office at least one day a week. He said that he has noticed this with the increase in commute traffic and the visibility of people on the streets. He stated that it was incumbent upon WETA to encourage, enable, and accommodate the increased commute traffic.

4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS

Vice Chair Moyer recognized the passing of business leader and philanthropist Richard Blum, who she noted was a big supporter of water transit in the Bay.

Director Alba reported that she had attended a conference on the collaboration between the Nordic countries and the United States for a green transition initiative aimed to support and increase the adoption of sustainable technologies and innovation.

5. REPORTS OF STAFF

Executive Director Seamus Murphy began by introducing new WETA team members: Grant & Budgets Administrator Lynda Viray, Transportation Planner Gabriel Chan, and Marine Operations Supervisor Catherine Parson.

Mr. Murphy reported that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has continued the mask mandate at transit facilities through April 18. He said that there is an advocacy effort by the public transit community throughout the country to separate the TSA mask mandate on transit from the airline industry.

Mr. Murphy said that Government & Regulatory Affairs Manager Lauren Gularte pushed for the creation of the Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) Public Ferry Caucus comprised of both private and public sector ferry operators and was promptly elected as Chair of the Caucus.

Mr. Murphy commented that WETA had been participating in several efforts led by employer coalitions to connect WETA services and information with employees.

With that, he turned it over to Ms. Gularte to provide a legislative update and to Planning & Development Manager Kevin Connolly to provide a ridership update. Ms. Gularte reported that the Governor is proposing to provide \$750 million to transit agencies to implement a free or heavily reduced fare program. She noted in separate legislation that the proposed AB 1919 would require every California transit agency to provide free transit service to individuals 25 years or younger in order to receive funding from the Transportation Development Act, local transportation fund, State Transit Assistance programs, and Low Carbon Transit Operations programs. She added that the bill, as introduced, does not provide funding to offset the increased costs of providing free transit, so WETA had testified in opposition to the bill on April 4.

Mr. Connolly provided a ridership update and stated that WETA would change its method of comparing ridership from the highest ridership year of 2019 to averaging the last five years. Mr. Connolly stated that WETA was averaging 40 to 50 passengers per trip but would like to be at 100 passengers per trip in response to a question from Vice Chair Moyer.

The Directors thought that it made sense to continue comparing ridership to WETA's best year 2019 based on the budget and expectations going forward.

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

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

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Alba made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Adopt a Resolution Regarding Remote Meetings Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361
- b. Board Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2022

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

Vice Chair Moyer seconded the motion, and the consent calendar carried unanimously.

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

7. APPROVE EXTENSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2022 PANDEMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM

Mr. Murphy introduced this item recommending extension of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Pandemic Recovery Program for up to one year through FY 2023. He commented that the recommendation was for up to one year but that the Board could choose to do something else including reverting back to the original fare program. He noted that there was a revenue cost associated with keeping the Pandemic Recovery Program fares in place but that doing so would increase the relevance of the agency. Mr. Murphy said that WETA had received an additional \$26 million in federal funding allowing WETA to be in position to be able to offer the fares for another year.

Mr. Murphy asked Public Information & Marketing Manager Thomas Hall to talk about the ridership growth and outreach efforts over the last year under the Pandemic Recovery Program and Principal Planner Michael Gougherty to present the fiscal impact on behalf of Chief Financial Officer Erin McGrath. Mr. Hall shared the presentation and reminded the Board that WETA adopted the

Pandemic Recovery Principles last February which were used to guide the Pandemic Recovery Program. He said that the principles were designed to incentivize the return of riders to the WETA system, accommodate changes in travel patterns, and attract a new and diversified ridership base.

Mr. Gougherty noted that the ridership projections for the next fiscal year used three scenarios: a base case, a conservative case, and an optimistic case and applied a methodology that is used by BART.

Mr. Gougherty said approval of the item would continue the current fares for up to 12 months and if no other action is taken at the end of the 12 months or FY 2023, fares would revert back to the 2019 fares and followed up with the next steps. He reminded everyone that there was a lot of discussion at the regional level about furthering fare coordination and integration for regional transit operators and initiatives that could have an impact on future fares.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chair Wunderman opened the public hearing to receive comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bay Area Council Policy Director Emily Loper, Seamless Bay Area Advocacy Director Adina Levin, and Redwood City Port Commission Chair Lorianne Kastrop spoke in support of extending the program.

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

The Directors thanked the team for their work and reiterated several positive reasons for continuing the program.

Director Intintoli made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-14 approving this item.

Chair Wunderman called for any additional public comments, and there were none, which concluded the public comment period.

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

Following up on Vice Chair Moyer's comments, WETA General Counsel Madeline Chun from Hanson Bridgett LLP stated that all the materials that pertained to this effort including all of the public outreach efforts, notices, surveys, as well as the PowerPoint presentation would be included as part of the public record.

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

8. RECEIVE BERKELEY FERRY SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

Mr. Gougherty presented this item recommending receipt of the Berkeley Ferry Service Business Plan.

Before Mr. Gougherty shared his presentation, he began by acknowledging the consultant team and partners CDM Smith Bill Hurrell, Economic & Planning Systems Associate Rosanna Ren on behalf of Executive Vice President Ashleigh Kanat, and City of Berkeley Department of Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Supervising Civil Engineer Nelson Lam and Senior Management analyst Roger Miller.

Mr. Gougherty explained the goals of the plan, noting that a written summary of the plan was included in the staff report and that the full plan was available online for download and review. He and Ms. Ren went through the PowerPoint presentation highlighting some of the major findings, the economic development opportunities, and equity considerations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Lam spoke in support of the plan and looked forward to continued collaboration with WETA staff on the next step of the Berkeley Ferry Terminal Project.

Berkeley resident David Fielder, Berkeley resident, sailor, and windsurfer Gordon Stout, and Berkeley Parks, Recreation, Waterfront Commission marina district member Claudia Kawczynska, and Kelly Hammargren asked clarifying questions and stated their skepticism and concerns of building a ferry terminal at the Berkeley Marina.

Tideline Marine Group Chief Executive Officer stated that Tideline was running the current Berkeley ferry service.

Berkeley resident Gerald Bellows thanked the staff for the report, thought the issues were thoroughly researched, and supported moving forward with the plan.

Mr. Gougherty and Mr. Hurrell addressed the shift in ridership from other services, stating that the Alameda County Regional Transportation model was used to project the ridership forecast to include existing ferry services as well as the proposed Berkeley service.

In response to Chair Wunderman, Mr. Hurrell and Mr. Gougherty explained factors that led to the determination for weekend only service to Larkspur.

Director Intintoli commented that challenges currently exist, that the plan is a living document, and that between now and the expected 2026 start of operations, there would be changes.

The Directors thanked the staff and consultants for their efforts and the public for their comments and involvement. They acknowledged the issues that were discussed, stated their concerns on omissions in the report, and expressed their interest in continuing with the efforts.

Ms. Chun noted that the resolution to be acted upon by the Board was to receive the initial version of the Berkeley Ferry Service Business Plan and that any periodic updates that were major would come back to the Board.

Director Intintoli made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-15 approving this item.

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

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

9. SEA CHANGE HYDROGEN-POWERED VESSEL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Mr. Murphy introduced the informational item seeking input and direction from the Board to guide the considerations that should be taken into account for a six-month demonstration project to operate the hydrogen powered vessel, *Sea Change*, in public ferry service. He asked Operations & Maintenance Manager Timothy Hanners to describe the service plan and breakdown of the cost.

Mr. Hanners said that the nation's first hydrogen-powered vessel, *Sea Change*, had recently completed sea trials and received Coast Guard approvals and was expected to be delivered to the San Francisco Bay Area by the end of April.

The Directors expressed their interest and excitement in the project.

Mr. Murphy stated that there were some private and public sector partners who had expressed some interest in partnering with WETA to share the cost of the demonstration project during the six-month period.

PUBLIC COMMENT

SWITCH Maritime LLC Founder/Chief Executive Officer Pace Ralli commented that he was up in Bellingham, WA and was on board the vessel earlier in the day.

Director Alba expressed her excitement of the demonstration, emphasized the educational awareness opportunity, and to be conscious of the costs.

10. WETA 2050 SERVICE VISION & BUSINESS PLAN WORK PLAN

Mr. Connolly presented this informational item on the status of the business plans and the scope for the next year.

Chair Wunderman thanked the staff, Vice Chair Moyer, and Director Alba for all their work and efforts.

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

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 Mr. Blum and his lifetime of service at 3:38 p.m.

- Board Secretary

END