

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

*(February 4, 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 1:31 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 Anthony Intintoli, and Director Monique Moyer were in attendance.

**3. REPORT OF BOARD CHAIR**

Chair Wunderman began by talking about the future of the organization, stating that it was time to look ahead and start preparing for recovery. He reported that the consensus of several members of the Bay Area Council Executive Committee who are leaders of different businesses said that they expected people to return to work sometime between July and September.

**4. REPORTS OF DIRECTORS**

Director Moyer reported that CBRE internal polls found that most of CBRE clients are looking to return to the office in the August to September timeframe in a hybrid, staggered fashion and was interested in looking at modeling different scenarios. She said that conversation had been initiated with the Port of San Francisco to talk about Mission Bay.

Director Alba said that she and Director Moyer had attended the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (Task Force) meeting of small transit operators for board members and general managers noting that the highlights of the meeting were around coordination among the transit agencies, the role that a potential transit network manager could fill in that coordination, and consistent feedback with emphasis on affordability and equity.

**5. REPORTS OF STAFF**

Chair Wunderman welcomed new Executive Director Seamus Murphy. Following Director Moyer's report, Chair Wunderman commented that it would be good to have a future agenda item providing a status on projects that have not been updated in a while.

Mr. Murphy noted that conversations at the staff level have taken place about restructuring the Executive Director's Report to focus on items that need emphasis and are timely adding that there had been some recent progress on Treasure Island to talk about kickstarting the effort, funding

opportunities, and service commencement and ramp up. He said that a more comprehensive update would be provided moving forward.

Mr. Murphy thanked current and retiring staff for their work, bringing him up to speed on all the issues, making the transition easy, and preparing the agency well; responsibly, financially, and from a staff perspective. He announced that Engineering & Maintenance Administrator Tim Hanners had been selected to replace retiring Operations & Maintenance Manager Keith Stahnke as the new Operations & Maintenance Manager.

Mr. Murphy provided five written reports and pointed out that MTC had approved the allocation of approximately \$180 million – including \$4.9 million to WETA - of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) funding to Bay Area transit operators that had received insufficient shares of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding adding that MTC staff and Bay Area transit operators would be developing alternative distribution scenarios for the approximately \$803 million remaining CRRSAA funds.

Mr. Murphy thanked Director Moyer for bringing up Mission Bay and the need to figure out opportunities to fill the funding gap.

Lastly, Mr. Murphy reported that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) had issued a mask requirement on public transit and other transportation conveyance modes throughout the country that would be enforced by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), noting that the WETA was taking a close look at how the federal requirement differed from the California mandate and how this might apply to the WETA system. He said that the consensus of the operators was that of an opportunity to remind riders that masks are required and that there was no change in operational requirements or enforcement of that mandate.

Chair Wunderman thanked Mr. Murphy for his report and talked about discussing with the Directors what kinds of information they thought would be helpful and would like to see in the report.

Mr. Murphy offered to answer any questions and then invited Planning & Development Manager Kevin Connolly to provide an update on the Monthly Ridership and Recovery Report. Mr. Connolly reported that the positive trend in ridership in early/mid-January did not continue and that there was decline across the board systemwide.

Mr. Connolly said that WETA was discussing Richmond's ridership performance and would be meeting with partner West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) to discuss the near and long-term future of the Richmond service later this month.

Mr. Connolly offered to answer any questions and added that commuter ridership is generally stable but that there was a decline in recreational and riders in the construction industry when there is rainy and stormy weather.

Mr. Hanners confirmed that \$9.06 million was the total cost of the Mission Bay project which included construction of an all-electric ferry and shoreside charging infrastructure, and Program Manager/Analyst Lauren Gularte stated that because of the way the grant was submitted, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) advised that construction of the vessel not commence until Mission Bay was moving forward in response to Chair Wunderman.

## **6. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Director Intintoli made a motion to approve the consent calendar:

- a. Board Meeting Minutes – January 14, 2021

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

## **7. BAY AREA TRANSIT AGENCY COORDINATION, BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE UPDATE**

Mr. Murphy introduced this informational item providing an update on the efforts of the MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (Task Force) to improve the region's public transportation network and invited Mr. Connolly to share his presentation which included a timeline of future WETA Board actions that relate to restarting service and incorporating equity and regional goals.

Mr. Murphy said that goals were developed collectively by the transit operators to help guide operations during the pandemic and some of the ongoing, long-term coordination which include enhanced transit coordination, fare integration, and equity. He explained that these goals come with a risk and new sources of revenue needed to be identified to ensure that new regional integration strategies can be advanced.

Chair Wunderman felt that the public would be more responsive to coming up with money in the form of a funding measure when the promise at the end was to have a better, integrated, more frequent, and more reliable service.

Director Alba said that she was encouraged by the initiative and pointed out a Twitter thread involving nine transit agencies demonstrating the benefits of coordination and that the implementation plan should place an emphasis on achieving long-term goals.

Chair Wunderman expressed his concern that responsibility for prioritization of services does not get turned over to an individual or organization that is not sensitive to WETA's cost basis and structure.

Director Moyer felt that some of the problems were solvable and volunteered to support the endeavor.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

City of Hercules Council Member Tiffany Grimsley expressed her support of the goals with a high priority on equity and inclusion.

Chair Wunderman said that he was impressed with what New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio did to establish a better transit system for New York City including consistent fares for all modes of transit no matter the destination.

Director Intintoli said that the situation in the Bay Area differed from that of New York City and was interested in finding out more about the New York City implementation and funding of the program.

## **8. ADOPT FISCAL YEAR 2022 PANDEMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM CORE PRINCIPLES**

Mr. Murphy said that there was a lot of uncertainty but that the core principles and the details that will be developed behind them will reflect how some of the commute patterns will evolve and invited Senior Planner/Project Manager Mike Gougherty to present the item recommending adoption of the core principles guiding the development of a Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Pandemic Recovery Program.

Mr. Gougherty shared his presentation which provided a review of some of the overarching goals including increasing ridership, restoring service, advancing equity, and integrating with the regional network of the Pandemic Recovery Program highlighting some of the challenges. He went through each of the individual 13 core principles generally centered on service, fares, coordination and process and emphasized that it was the start of an effort and an opportunity for the public to weigh in on the direction WETA was proposing to go.

Mr. Gougherty said that the 13 proposed core principles would be used to develop a detailed service plan and fare structure for the next fiscal year as part of the Pandemic Recovery Program that would eventually be presented to the Board for approval.

Mr. Gougherty spoke about some alternatives for the Vallejo monthly pass to reflect the commute needs of a staggered, hybrid schedule to provide clarification for Director Intintoli.

Director Alba said that the principles were super comprehensive but questioned if coordinating fare strategies with only other transit operators in the Bay Bridge corridor.

Mr. Murphy explained that the Bay Bridge corridor was central to WETA services but agreed with removing the Bay Bridge corridor.

Director Moyer asked whether a comparable model in other regional transit areas of the county existed and proved to be successful that WETA can capitalize upon.

Mr. Gougherty said that WETA regularly meets with other agencies through the Task Force to discuss thoughts and ideas.

Director Intintoli said providing ample service and getting people back on the boats would be the right approach but that financial sustainability would eventually have to be considered. He reminded everyone that funding for emergency response has never been financed and if there was an opportunity for new money.

Mr. Murphy stated that WETA's emergency response mandate was a justification for seeking additional support from every level of government and considered when the principles were developed.

Chair Wunderman commented that a conversation had been put on hold with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide funding for emergency response with the receipt of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds.

Chair Wunderman suggested that routes should be reconsidered and exploring the potential of Transportation Network Companies (TNC) partnerships to simplify trips.

Director Moyer left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Connolly said that WETA has started working on developing a TNC pilot program and that a TNC program was in place in Vallejo where ferry riders are offered a discount to use TNCs. He added that WETA was looking to potentially expand the concept and model to other places and dovetail talking about equity into some underserved communities.

Director Alba made a motion to approve the item as amended.

Chair Wunderman called for public comments and there were none.

Director Intintoli seconded the motion and the item passed unanimously.

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

**9. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No further public comments were shared.

With all business concluded, Chair Wunderman adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.

- Board Secretary

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