



MINUTES

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

1. Roll Call

Chair Peskin called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Present at Roll Call: Commissioners Haney, Mar, Mandelman Melgar, Preston, Peskin, Ronen, and Stefani (8)

Absent at Roll Call: Commissioners Chan, Safai (entered during Item 2) Walton (entered during Item 3) (3)

2. Approve the Minutes of the December 15, 2020 Meeting - ACTION

There was no public comment on the minutes.

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Ronen.

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Chan, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Melgar, Preston, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, and Stefani (10)

Absent: Commissioner Walton (1)

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021 - ACTION

Chair Peskin called the nominations to order for Chair and Vice Chair. He said that he will not be seeking reappointment as Chair and thanked his colleagues for their support throughout the years. He also thanked Executive Director Tilly Chang and staff for their work particularly around Caltrain, the TNC tax, reforming the governance structure for the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) to guide the work of getting to Caltrain extended to the Salesforce Transit Center, as well as other work performed throughout the city. Chair Peskin stated that he enjoyed the working relationship he had with Vice Chair Mandelman and said he would like to continue the relationship and ensure a smooth handoff if the Board so desires by nominating Vice Chair Mandelman for the position of Chair and nominating himself for the position of Vice Chair for 2021.

Commissioner Walton seconded the motion.

Commissioner Ronen expressed her support for the motion, and thanked Chair Peskin for his work as Chair for the past two years of the Transportation Authority. She also expressed appreciation for Vice Chair Mandelman and said that she believes this leadership team is up to the task to guide the city's transportation sector out of the current state of crisis it is in due to the pandemic.

Commissioner Preston echoed Commissioner Ronen's comments and thanked Chair



Peskin and Vice Chair Mandelman for their service. He added that in his short tenure serving on the Transportation Authority Board, he has learned much about transportation through Chair Peskin and appreciated all his efforts in this area both at the Transportation Authority and at the Board of Supervisors.

Chair Peskin closed nominations.

During public comment, David Pilpel expressed his support for the proposed change of leadership.

Roland Lebrun also shared his support for the motion and expressed his concern about Caltrain issues including the recent award of a \$600 million contract to Transit America Systems, Inc., which would essentially take up 100% of the Measure RR sales tax for the next several years. He said the contract didn't need to be renewed this early and that there was an opportunity with new leadership at Caltrain to do things differently.

The motion to elect Commissioner Mandelman as Chair and Commissioner Peskin as Vice Chair for 2021 was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Chan, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Melgar, Preston, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, and Walton (11)

Absent: (0)

Commissioner Peskin congratulated Chair Mandelman and said he looked forward to their continued working relationship.

Chair Mandelman echoed his colleagues and said that Commissioner Peskin's list of accomplishments during his two terms served as Chair was impossible to match. He highlighted some of his commendable projects including Prop D, which he stated was an extraordinary achievement that required extensive work in Sacramento. He also highlighted his work with the Transportation Task Force 2045, TJPA, Caltrain, his work with building regional relationships, and conversations about autonomous vehicles.

Vice Chair Peskin thanked Chair Mandelman for his comments and shared his appreciation towards his Chief of Staff, Sunny Angulo. He said that he has been his partner in many of the efforts that Chair Mandelman mentioned, including another initiative he is hoping the city can achieve in this calendar year with the help of Assemblymember Chiu, namely automated speed enforcement in the City and County of San Francisco.

Chair Mandelman said that a functioning transportation network locally and regionally will be vital to the economic recovery as they come out of the pandemic. He said that the climate crisis is not going away, and reliable, accessible transit is key to meeting climate goals. He said that the pandemic has exposed many vulnerabilities and inequities in transportation as it has in so many other aspects in society, and the Board now has the chance to make sure the system is dependable for everyone who depends on it.

Chair Mandelman said while the Board continues its critical work to eliminate traffic fatalities through Vision Zero safety projects, supports lifeline services, and considers new policies, his first priority as Chair of the Board would be to help stabilize Muni and paratransit service and ensure that San Francisco remains a transit first city. Chair Mandelman observed that there will be challenges but also have great opportunities.



He noted that the new Presidential Administration and the election results in Georgia inspire hopes for significant federal investment in transit infrastructure. Lastly, Chair Mandelman said the Board will be laying the groundwork towards the renewal of the Prop K sales tax program along with an update on the county wide long range transportation plan and that the Board will be responsible for steering investments to meet Plan Bay Area goals. He said it is up to the Board to make sure that the resources are used wisely towards securing a safe, reliable, and equitable transportation system that San Franciscans deserve. He thanked his colleagues and said he looks forward to working with them.

4. Allocate \$16,546,728 in Prop K Sales Tax Funds, with Conditions, for Two Requests - ACTION

Anna LaForte, Deputy Director for Policy and Programming, and Julie Kirschbaum, Director of Transit with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) presented the item.

Chair Mandelman asked if there was a timeline and process to ultimately get to an all-electric fleet and asked how many more non-electric purchases would be made.

Ms. Kirschbaum said that according to current SFMTA Board policy, SFMTA would begin purchasing battery-electric buses in 2025, with the goal of having a full fleet of electric buses by 2035. However, she said SFMTA would have to re-evaluate that schedule in the next 18 to 24 months because the battery-electric pilot project had been delayed due to the COVID pandemic.

Chair Mandelman asked if they could make the timeline more aggressive.

Ms. Kirschbaum replied that the next vehicle procurement was planned for 2025 when the buses, acquired in 2013, would reach the ends of their useful lives. She added that SFMTA would work closely with the industry to make sure the battery-electric technology would work in San Francisco's difficult operating environment. She pointed out that SFMTA's transit fleet accounted for only 0.01% of the transportation's sector's emissions because a high percentage of the fleet was electric, and the hybrid-diesel vehicles used a biodiesel fuel blend. She said that SFMTA had a very small carbon footprint for a transit agency.

Chair Mandelman said he suspected that the Transportation Authority Board would continue to push to ensure that the 30 30-foot hybrid buses would be SFMTA's last transit vehicle purchase that contributed significantly to the City's carbon footprint. He added that access to Muni for the residents of the hill neighborhoods in Districts 7 and 8 was currently very poor.

Commissioner Safai thanked SFMTA for being diligent in moving the Mission Street Excelsior Safety project forward. He said it was the largest capital project District 11 had seen in decades and said the subject design allocation was important to keep the project moving forward.

Commissioner Melgar thanked SFMTA for the presentation and expressed her support for the Excelsior project. She echoed Commissioner Mandelman's comments on Muni access for residents in the hills and said that she was hoping the Transportation Authority and SFMTA could work together to bring the community routes back into service.



During public comment Roland Lebrun said the time had come for SFMTA to do something different. He suggested a collaboration with TESLA Corporation to adopt its technology for the new electric buses. He also suggested that SFMTA should have the capacity to recharge the buses on the fly as well as at the ends of their runs.

Paul Wermer thanked Commissioner Mandelman for raising questions regarding the schedule for fully electrifying the Muni fleet. He urged the Transportation Authority to be cautious of claims from the biofuel industry of how benign the fuel was.

Cat Carter with San Francisco Transit Riders congratulated Chair Mandelman and Vice Chair Peskin on their new roles. She urged the Board to approve both allocation requests. With respect to the 30-foot buses, she said that she understood that Muni was struggling with a massive backlog with capital needs, but said it was important to ensure that transit dependent residents in the difficult-to-reach hills had access to Muni services. Ms. Karter said that while it was important to go from hybrid diesel to battery-electric, it was necessary to replace vehicles that had exceeded their useful lives and should not be delayed until cleaner technology was available.

David Pilpel said the Transportation Authority should ensure that SFMTA performed mid-life overhauls for the new buses. He expressed support for the replacement of the 30-foot buses and suggested that SFMTA restore all Muni community routes very soon.

Hayden Miller expressed doubt that this was the right time to purchase the 30-foot buses. He said new battery and hybrid electric technology would be coming out in the next few years, and with most routes currently out of service, purchasing new buses should require a strong commitment from SFMTA that the community routes be restored. He suggested SFMTA wait to replace the buses for a few years, especially given SFMTA's shortage of bus parking and maintenance facility capacity.

Director Chang clarified that the staff recommendation for the 30-foot bus procurement included a condition that Muni perform mid-life overhauls, and said this had been standard practice for Transportation Authority vehicle procurement grants.

Commissioner Preston moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Walton.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Chan, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Melgar, Preston, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton (11)

Absent: (0)

Other Items

5. Introduction of New Items - INFORMATION

There were no new items introduced.

6. Public Comment

During public comment, Dave Rhody with the Climate Reality Project expressed his frustration with not being able to comment on item #4 before it was voted on. He stated that the purchase of the 30 foot hybrid buses is a bad idea for San Francisco, the environment, and a step in the wrong direction towards the goal for zero



emissions. He said that though these buses will run on electricity, the buses use biofuel, which is referred to renewable diesel. Mr. Rhody said biodiesel is even worse for the environment than petroleum diesel.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.