

BOARD ACTION UPDATE: March 24 **MTA Will Offer "Charter Bus" Service to Democratic Convention, if State, FTA Approve**

Editor's Note: This story was updated at 9 a.m., Friday, March 24.

(March 24) The MTA will provide "charter-type" bus service for the Democratic National Convention in August if California law can be amended and the FTA permits the agency to offer the service.

[See metro.net March 24 report](#) That motion and some 60 others touching on bus procurement and clean-air rules, among many other topics, were discussed during the March Board meeting.

Item 47 APPROVED by the Board. A motion to support the vision and goals of the Southern California Intercity Rail Group and to work closely with SCIRG in seeking funding for transportation projects in Los Angeles County

Item 50 APPROVED by the Board. A motion to seek an amendment to state law and to seek a waiver from the FTA that would permit the MTA to provide "charter-type" bus service, operators and staff for the Democratic National Convention scheduled August 12 - 17. The motion would direct the CEO to negotiate with city agencies to determine a range of services the MTA could offer. The CEO would ensure that any service provided is "cost-neutral" to the MTA and doesn't interfere with regular service to the public.

Item 53 Following a closed session, the Board decided that this issue should be subject to labor negotiations and should not be voted on. This motion by Director Jenny Oropeza, carried over from February, would prevent the MTA from approving creation of any transportation zones unless the governing organization "assumes the collective bargaining agreements, rights and obligations that currently exist between the MTA and the labor organizations representing employees who will be affected or displaced...." The new zone would be "obligated to employ" MTA employees working there when the new zone begins operation.

Item 18 APPROVED by the Board. This motion, which requires a two-thirds vote, would award a \$203,946 fixed-price contract to E.F. Johnson Radio Systems of Mesa, Ariz., for purchase of 177 portable field radios and related equipment for use on the Metro Green Line.

[See metro.net Dec. 3: CNG Fueling Facility](#) **Item 19 APPROVED by the Board.** A motion to exercise a \$12,178,440 option with Trillium USA, Inc., of Salt Lake City, to design, build and maintain a CNG fueling station at Division 1. The company completed a similar CNG facility at Division 7 in January and another fueling station at Division 5 in December.

Item 20 APPROVED by Committee. A motion to delete a requirement to provide Automatic Voice Annunciation Systems on 223 New Flyer high-floor CNG buses now on order. The MTA has decided to implement a voice system technology fleetwide through the "smart bus" program, rather than have differing systems installed on portions of the bus fleet.

Item 22 APPROVED by the Board. A motion to request that the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) modify its clean-air rules to address concerns of LA County transit operators and delay an April

hearing on proposed clean-air Rule 1192. The MTA would ask the AQMD to provide funding to help transit agencies comply with proposed emissions rules.

See
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Feb. 25:
[Clean Air
Rules](#)

The agency would ask for a more flexible AQMD approach to reducing emissions, to allow agencies to find the most cost-effective method of meeting emissions targets and to allow development of multiple technologies. The motion proposes that clean-air requirements be phased in over many years to allow agencies to plan and budget for the change.

Item 23 PARTIAL BOARD APPROVAL. This portion of the motion was not approved by the Board. Director John Fasana has filed a motion to approve a new bus procurement policy that would supplant all previous policies relating to the purchase of CNG buses. If approved, the Board would delay further CNG bus purchases "until the service performance, reliability and cost issues can be addressed and remedied."

This portion of the motion was approved by the Board. MTA staff would be directed to seek federal or state assistance to offset the cost of clean-air requirements. The staff also would be directed to develop specifications for driver-side bus doors and to explore the use of articulated and bi-articulated buses to improve service. A report to the Board would be due in 90 days.

Items 27/28 APPROVED by Committee. Together, these two items would authorize an expenditure of \$550,650 to reimburse Tutor-Saliba-Perini for repairing water leaks in the Metro Red Line stations at Vermont/Beverly and Vermont/Sunset.

Items 41/42 APPROVED by the Board. Together, these two items concern the procurement of 74 Breda rail cars for the Metro Red Line through a financing program called "defeased leasing." In this type of financing program, outside investors would lease the rail equipment, valued at about \$146 million, from the MTA as a means of gaining a tax benefit by depreciating the lease over the life of the contract.

The MTA would lease the equipment back from the investors at an estimated savings of \$15 million over the original purchase price. In 1997, the MTA executed a defeased lease of 30 Metro Red Line rail cars with the Bank of New York as the equity investor.

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