

AGENDA: Community Leaders Urge Action by State Lawmakers

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: BART Board Room

Introductory Remarks: Director Carole Ward Allen

Uncle of Oscar Grant: Cephus Johnson

Nation of Islam: Minister Keith Muhammad

Allen Temple Baptist Church: Rev. Daniel Buford

MLK Jr. Freedom Center: Eric Fuller

BART Board Director: Joel Keller

BART Board Director: Lynette Sweet

BART Board Director: Tom Radulovich

Opens Up For Questions Director Carole Ward Allen

Community Leaders Urge Action by State Lawmakers



Carole Ward Allen

**BART Board Member &
Chair of BART Police Department
Review Committee**



Lynette Sweet

**BART Board Member &
Member of BART Police Department
Review Committee**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY & BART URGE LAWMAKERS TO APPROVE CITIZEN OVERSIGHT OF BART POLICE WITHIN 3 WEEKS

STATE LAWMAKERS URGED TO FINALIZE CITIZEN OVERSIGHT

OAKLAND, CA – Community groups joined the BART Board today in urging state lawmakers to quickly pass a bill before the September recess so BART can establish citizen oversight of its police force this year.

"The time to act is now," 17-year-old Eric Fuller said. Fuller is a youth member of the MLK Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, which is dedicated to peaceful solutions to conflict. "The community has raised its collective voice to work with BART to make significant changes to the BART Police Department. So, our lawmakers must understand that Bay Area residents can not wait until next year before any legislative changes are made. You must act immediately to ensure the safety of our community. The BART Police Department needs citizen oversight now."

On Thursday, August 13, in a unanimous vote, the BART Board of Directors reached a major milestone in delivering on its commitment to improve police services and public confidence by approving independent citizen oversight of the BART Police Department.

"The Board action was truly historic," BART Board Member Carole Ward Allen said. Ward Allen chairs the BART Police Department Review Committee, which Board President Thomas Blalock created following the January 1 shooting of Oscar Grant on the platform of Fruitvale Station by a former police officer. "What the Board approved has one of the strongest components of citizen oversight in the state of California. The process now moves to the state legislature. We urge our state representatives to take swift action so we can implement citizen oversight this year as we continue to work to make the BART Police Department the best it can be."

"We have a dedicated, professional and highly trained police force at BART and we want to keep it that way," Director Joel Keller said. Keller is the vice chair of the committee. "Citizen oversight, if done properly, can help us achieve that."

BART NEEDS CHANGE IN STATE LAW TO MOVE FORWARD

BART is a special district created by the state legislature and requires an amendment of the BART Act to create citizen oversight as adopted by the Board.

The citizen oversight the Board adopted encompasses two major areas where legislative change is required to meet its stated purpose. The first area involves the creation of the position of independent police auditor. Because the auditor would report directly to the Board, the position requires an amendment to the BART Act.

The second area requires amending the General Manager's authority to provide for a role for the auditor and the board in the discipline process for members of the police department. In BART's newly adopted citizen review, both the independent auditor and the Board would each have a role in recommending discipline, which also requires an amendment to the BART Act.

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“We are only seeking permissive changes to state law,” BART Board Member Tom Radulovich said. Radulovich has been a long supporter of BART Police citizen oversight and sits on the BART Police Department Review Committee. “The citizen oversight we adopted is based on what members of the community have told us they want. It incorporates the community’s needs and the best elements of the various citizen oversight entities at police departments around the Bay Area and beyond.”

CITIZEN OVERSIGHT RESULT OF COMMUNITY INPUT

The Board adopted the citizen oversight model after months of careful study of existing citizen oversight entities and by hearing from the community at public meetings and through written comments.

“We met with the Bay Area delegation of the state legislature several times over the past year to keep them in the loop on our progress to create citizen oversight of BART Police,” BART Board Member Lynette Sweet said. Sweet also sits on the BART Police Department Review Committee. We promised the legislators that we’d do our part to create a strong citizen oversight model for them to approve before the end of their legislative session. We delivered on that promise by working diligently with all our stakeholders to create a BART model that incorporates the values articulated by the community. We even have money in the BART budget to fully fund the BART model. All we need now is for the state legislature to amend the BART Act before the legislative session ends in three weeks so we can implement citizen oversight of BART Police quickly.”

CITIZEN OVERSIGHT MODEL AVAILABLE ONLINE

The citizen oversight model adopted by the Board is available online at www.BART.gov.

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