



Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) - Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 28, 2024, 8:30 a.m.

Dual Locations: Bishop Council Chambers and Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers

Bishop Council Chambers 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers 437 Old Mammoth Rd., Ste Z Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Members Present: Chair Bob Gardner, Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz

Members Absent: Board Member Jeff Griffiths

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Bob Gardner called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chambers, 377 West Line Street, Bishop California. Board Members Lynda Salcido and Chris Bubser attended the meeting in the Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, California.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member John Wentworth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Community Programs Specialist Tonja Galentine introduced herself, spoke about the counties she worked with, and provided information about the programs her department offered.

There was discussion between Ms. Galentine and members of the Board.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Moved by Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

- 4.1 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 26, 2024**
- 4.2 **Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Activities Report**
- 4.3 **Ratification of Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Year 1 Audit**
- 4.4 **Approve Buttermilks Climbing Area Vault Toilet Building Donation**
- 4.5 **Approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Supplemental Project List for the City of Bishop**
- 4.6 **Approve Amendment No. 2 to Professional Services Agreement with Alta Planning and Design for the Provision of Trails Planning Services for the Eastern Sierra Towns-to-Trails Plan**
- 4.7 **Approve Amendment No. 1 to Professional Services Agreement with Kate Morley for the Provision of Administrative Services**

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lynn Boulton spoke about Item #4.6 Town to Trails, with regard to the maps that would be used for this project and requested that an ArcGIS map with layers be used rather than story maps.

There was discussion between Ms. Boulton and members of the Board.

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Receive a Presentation from Aaron Wilcher, Inyo Mono UCCE Community Economic Development Advisor on a Discussion of Regional Needs and Partnership Opportunities

Inyo Mono University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Community Economic Development Advisor Aaron Wilcher outlined the information in the UCCE Eastern Sierra Regional Needs Assessment Partnership presentation.

There was discussion between Mr. Wilcher and members of the Board.

5.2 Introduce Kate Morley, ESCOG Administration Assistant

Executive Director Elaine Kabala introduced the ESCOG's Administrative Assistant Kate Morley.

Ms. Morley spoke about her background and said that she looked forward to supporting Ms. Kabala, the ESCOG, and their partners.

There was discussion between Ms. Morley, Ms. Kabala, and members of the Board.

5.3 Consider Concept Application for the U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and Adopt a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Caltrans District 9 Senior Environmental Planner Neil Peacock and Regional Funding Specialist Catherine Carr provided additional information about the program.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Mr. Peacock, Ms. Carr and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Trina Orrill

Adopt the Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the Executive Director to Submit an

Application for the U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Grant.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

5.4 Adopt a Resolution of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to Expand the Program of Work Known as the “ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program” and Seek Approval from Member Agencies for this Work.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth

Seconded by Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Adopt the Resolution of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to Expand a Program of Work to be Known as the “ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program” and to Seek Approval From Member Agencies for this Work.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

5.5 Discuss Regional Advocacy for Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fairgrounds Staffing Sustainability

Councilmember Stephen Muchovej led a discussion around his concerns about staffing and appointment of the new Board for the Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fairgrounds.

There was discussion between Executive Director Elaine Kabala and members of the Board.

Staff was given direction to start thinking about the importance of the regional need for the Tri-County Fairgrounds, attend the Inyo County Board of Supervisors meeting on September 3rd which would include an item with the current Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Fairgrounds, Michael Francesconi, on hand to answer questions, and to draft a letter of support of the Fairgrounds.

5.6 Executive Director Update Report

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala also added that the California Transportation Commission would be in Bishop on September 25th and 26th and that it would be a good opportunity for our elected representatives to meet with the Commission. She said that September 25th was also the best date for a strategic planning session, and that she was working with the Institute for Local Government (ILG) to develop a survey to pre inform some of the conversation which would be sent to Board and regional leadership prior to the planning session and requested that the survey be returned to her within the next ten days. She said that Inyo County had been working with the Forest Service and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) on actionable recommendations related to the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative (BIRPI). Ms. Kabala reported that she had forwarded letters to the editor that she had received from Lynn Boulton regarding the Towns to Trails Project and said that she had an in person discussion with Ms. Boulton and Board Member Chris Bubser. Ms. Kabala provided an update on regional housing needs assessment and announced that there was a grant available from the Federal Environmental Protection Act (EPA) for Technical Assistance for local planning work specific to identifying opportunities to connect economic development associated with sustainable recreation and gateway communities to downtown revitalization. She said that she was considering attending the Cal Forward Conference in Sacramento in October if the Board was in support of that.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member John Wentworth spoke about the euthanization of a bear in Mammoth.

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Rob Patterson spoke about an incident between a bear and a camper in the Lakes Basin which resulted in the camper being injured and unfortunately, the bear being euthanized by lethal injection by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Mr. Patterson said there would be a detailed discussion at the September 4th Town of Mammoth Lakes Town Council meeting with representation from DFW Leadership and said the Town would be working on educating the public about how to act around bears.

Board Member Stephen Muchovej asked Mr. Patterson if there was any enforcement in place regarding the behavior of campers around bears. Mr. Muchovej requested that the Town have further discussions with the DFW with regard to the process of the disposal of euthanized bears. He said that the tribe ended up getting the bear and giving it a proper burial. Mr. Muchovej reported that the California Transportation Commission would be in Bishop next month and that some of the members of the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) would meet with them. He said that the City of Bishop had been hit with a few disasters recently, including the Willow Street Fire and said that the volunteer firefighters should be commended for their efforts which kept it from spreading within town. He requested that during disaster situations members of the public not mob the scene to look at it, as they get in the way of the first responders. He reported that there was also a fire at the Bishop High School gymnasium, and that during the high wind events last weekend a section of the high school roof blew off. Mr. Muchovej said that the City would need to address many Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) in the near future.

Board Member Karen Schwartz announced that the Tri-County Fair would be held this weekend, and spoke about the importance of building and safety rules.

Board Member Chris Bubser thanked the Bishop tribe that had reached out and to give the bear a proper send off and for issuing a press release about it.

Chair Bob Gardner reported that the Mono County Board of Supervisors (MCBOS) would finalize their budget in September. Chair Gardner said the Board would look at setting priorities including housing, childcare, and a bottle ban which would parallel Mammoth Lakes' ban. He said he had spoken with representatives from the Forest Service about the Mono Basin Visitor Center Building and its need for repairs.

Board Member John Wentworth provided an election update for Mammoth and reported that only two candidates, Bill Sauser and Brent Truax, had pulled papers for the two seats that would be open on the Town Council, therefore, Mr. Sauser would be reappointed, and Mr. Truax would be appointed as a new Town Councilmember.

Chair Bob Gardner reported that the County would have a 3% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) increase on the ballot and said that Mammoth would have a 2% TOT increase, as well as Fire and School increases on the ballot.

Board Member Stephen Muchovej reported that the Bishop Unified School District would have two increases on the ballot for building improvements, one for the elementary school, and the other for both the high school and middle school. Mr. Muchovej said that there were six people running for the three open seats on the Bishop City Council.

Board Member Tina Orrill reported that there would be a 5th District Supervisor runoff on the ballot for Inyo County and clarified that Round Valley residents would vote on the high school bond, but not the elementary school bond.

There was discussion between Mr. Patterson and members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items requested.

The Board went into recess at 10:25 a.m.

8. CLOSED SESSION

The Board went into Closed Session at 10:35 a.m.

8.1 Public Employee Performance Evaluation – Pursuant to Government Code §54957 – Title: Executive Director

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 11:07 a.m. and announced that there was no reportable action taken.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m. to a special meeting scheduled to be held on September 25, 2024.

Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk