



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

Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 13, 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, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz

Members Absent: Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chamber, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA. Board Member Lynda Salcido attended the meeting from the Town of Mammoth Lakes Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member Chris Bubser led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center (BRC) Director Meryl Picard introduced herself and reported that the Eastern Sierra BRC recently held a successful grand opening event. Ms. Picard said that one of the BRC's goals was to network throughout Inyo and Mono Counties to determine what the resource needs of small business were. She said that the BRC would also help the non-profit organizations and reported that they would partner the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) out of Kern. She spoke about staffing as well as the desire to bring on some volunteers to help out in the office.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala requested that Items 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Board Member Lynda Salcido joined the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Approve Items 4.1 and 4.2 on the Consent Agenda.

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

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.1 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 23, 2024**

4.2 **Approve Revision #1 to Agreement No. 1283-RT: Sierra Nevada Conservancy Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant for the Eastern Sierra Towns to Trail Plan**

4.3 **Approve Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that this item had been pulled from consent due to the request of Legal Counsel to provide the original agreement with Whitebark Institute to the Board for the Board's review prior to approving the amendment to the contract.

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

Approve Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental Policy Act Project Management and Project Implementation Services.

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

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.4 Approve Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that this item had been pulled from consent due to the request of Legal Counsel to provide the original agreement with Whitebark Institute to the Board for the Board's review prior to approving the amendment to the contract.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Chris Bubser

Approve Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental Policy Act Services for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator.

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

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.5 Ratify Subaward Agreement Number SBC-2024156: Agreement Between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Phase

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that the agreement for this item had not been included in the packet due to a clerical error. Ms. Kabala discussed the scope of the contract.

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

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Ratify Subaward Agreement Number SBC-2024156: Agreement Between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Phase.

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

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

5. **POLICY MATTERS**

5.1 **Receive presentation from IMBC Coordinator Scott Armstrong**

Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) Coordinator Scott Armstrong outlined the information in the 2024 Winter ESCOG Broadband Update.

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

5.2 **Review and Approve Submission for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Applications:**

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center (BRC) Director Meryl Picard provided additional information about the Start-up Programming Funding for the Regional Business Resource Center Small Business Catalyst Program.

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

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Seconded by Board Member John Wentworth

Approve Submission for the following Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Applications: Eastern Sierra Regional Collaborative Capacity Incubator,

Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis, and Start-up Programming Funding for Regional Business Resource Center.

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

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

5.3 Discuss 2024 Inyo and Mono County Election Results

Members of the Board outlined the information in the staff report.

Board Member Trina Orrill announced that Board Member Jeff Griffiths had been appointed as the 2025 California State Association of Counties (CSAC) President.

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

5.4 Executive Director Report

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

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

5.5 Recognize Chair Bob Gardner for Years of Service to the ESCOG

Executive Director Elaine Kabala congratulated Chair Bob Gardner on his many years and achievements as a public servant, and thanked him for his service on the ESCOG Board.

Board Member Chris Bubser read an email she had received from 33rd Congressional District of California U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar recognizing and thanking Bob Gardner for his many years of public service.

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

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that Inyo County recently went through a comprehensive class and compensation study and came to an agreement with their bargaining units to set their pay scales in the median range and said that he hoped that would have a positive effect on recruitment and retention moving

forward. Mr. Griffiths said that Inyo County had created an assessment appeals board, reported on one recent wildfire and two recent mobile home park fires in Lone Pine, and said that Inyo County was subsidizing emergency medical care in the Bishop area and had a cost share agreement with the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the City of Bishop and the County. He announced that the Highway 395 bypass was open and said that Inyo County had a development plan for the old 395 corridor to make it a gateway to Death Valley National Park. He announced that they had hired a Behavioral Health Director, opened the Sierra Business Resource Center, held a Ribbon Cutting for the Dave McCoy Memorial Highway, and had a Retirement Celebration for Jim Ellis.

Board Member John Wentworth thanked all for the Dave McCoy Memorial Highway, discussed the Town of Mammoth Lakes' (TOML) Town Council priorities and objectives process, said that he had requested that the Town Council adopt California's Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Wildfire Resilience Strategy and to bring that back to the ESCOG. He provided an air service update, and said that the skiing in Mammoth was good.

Board Member Chris Bubser reported that the Town of Mammoth Lakes tree lighting event at the Community Recreation Center (CRC) was very successful. She provided an update on the CRC, and programs provided there, and offered to host tours for any members of the Board wishing to check it out.

Board Member Karen Schwartz announced that the City of Bishop had a new Councilmember, Dennis Freundt. Ms. Schwartz provided an update on the Field 6 Improvement Project, said that they were looking for funding for basketball courts, and discussed potential improvements to the Millpond Recreation Area. She said that the Bishop Rural Fire Department was going through growing pains and was considering hiring full-time firefighters and was seeking community support. She announced that her husband's band, Hay Blackbird, would be playing at the Rambler's 10th Anniversary Party tonight and said her business would host a 5k Winter Series Fundraiser tomorrow for free soccer skills training through Eastside Youth.

Chair Bob Gardner reported that a housing analysis was presented at Tuesday's Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting and provided an update on the new jail in Bridgeport.

Board Member Lynda Salcido encouraged the Town of Mammoth Lakes to look at the County's housing analysis, and reported that Mono County had finalized the purchase of four units in Bridgeport that would be used for workforce housing, two of which would be reserved for County employees, and said that a fifth unit would become available by the end of the year. Ms. Salcido said that

she attended the Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra (DSES) fundraiser at the Mountain Saturday.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Board Member John Wentworth said that he would like the CalFire Wildfire Task Force Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Resilience Strategy to be considered as an informing document for the ESCOG and the regional efforts.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that most County elected officials would be attending the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Washington, DC on the same day the February ESCOG meeting was scheduled to be held.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m. to the next regular meeting schedule to be held on February 26, 2025.

Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk