



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

### **Minutes of Regular Meeting**

**February 26, 2025, 8:30 a.m.**

**437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes**

Members Present: Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland

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

Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. in the Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes.

#### **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member Paul McFarland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments given at this time.

#### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

Moved by Board Member Lynda Salcido

Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (8): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

#### **4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 13, 2024**

- 4.2 **Ratify Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium California Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778 Consent Form**
- 4.3 **Ratify Amendment No. 1 to Proposition 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator**
- 4.4 **Approve the Memorandum of Understanding Among the County of Inyo, the County of Mono, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the**
- 4.5 **Accept the Eastern Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2024 Progress Update and Direct Staff to Submit to the Economic Development Administration**
- 4.6 **Accept the 2023-2024 ESCOG Financial Statement**
- 4.7 **Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Activities Report Provided by Eastern Sierra Regional Broadband Coordinator Scott Armstrong**
- 4.8 **Approve a Resolution of the Board of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Adopting Corrective Actions Pursuant to the California Department of Transportation's Division of Local Assistance Corrective Action Plan**
- 4.9 **Approve Moving Regular April ESCOG Meeting Date from April 9, 2025 to April 11, 2025**

**5. POLICY MATTERS**

**5.1 Call for the Selection of Chair and Vice Chair**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala discussed the annual process for selecting a new Chair and Vice Chair.

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

Moved by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Appoint Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej as Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

For (8): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths  
Seconded by Board Member Trina Orrill

Appoint Board Member Chris Bubser as Vice Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments.

For (8): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.2 Receive a Presentation on Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Strategic Plan**

This item was taken out of order.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala and Inyo County County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg outlined the information in the ESCOG Strategic Plan Overview and Strategic Planning Retreat Report.

Board Members Trina Orrill and Jeff Griffiths left the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

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

Staff was given direction to increase communication with member agencies, to prepare a legislative platform, increase interagency collaboration, begin work to establish an Eastern Sierra Economic Development District, and begin work with Inyo County to develop a contract to leverage their Project Management Office.

**5.3 Approve Agreement Regarding Wildfire Coordinator Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Government Joint Powers Authority**

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

Inyo County County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg provided additional information about the structure and benefit of the agreement as well as potential future funding options.

Mono County County Administrative Officer Sandra Moberly spoke about a similar position Mono County had that was currently being funded from their general fund.

Legal Counsel Grace Weitz provided information regarding the legalities of the ESCOG hiring independent contractors who were also employees of member agencies.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Mr. Greenberg, Ms. Moberly, Ms. Weitz, and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Seconded by Board Member Paul McFarland

Approve the Agreement Regarding Wildfire Coordinator Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Government Joint Powers Authority with modifications as discussed.

For (8): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

#### **5.4 Approve Submission of the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture**

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

Board Member Paul McFarland requested that the City of Bridgeport be added to the list of communities on the grant application.

Mono County Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator Wendy Grasseschi and Inyo County Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator Kristen Pfeiler provided additional information regarding the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant.

Inyo County County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg provided additional information about the grant and application process.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Mr. Greenberg, Ms. Grasseschi, Ms. Pfeiler, and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member Lynda Salcido  
Seconded by Board Member Chris Bubser

Approve Submission of the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture.

For (8): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.5 Accept the State of California's "Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience"**

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

Inyo County Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator Kristen Pfeiler spoke in support of the State of California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience.

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

Moved by Board Member Paul McFarland  
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Accept the State of California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience.

For (8): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.6 Authorize the Chair to sign correspondence to The Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley RE: Federal Funding for Critical Wildfire Projects**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the letter to the Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley.

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

Moved by Board Member Paul McFarland

Seconded by Board Member Chris Bubser

Accept the letter to The Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley regarding Federal Funding for Critical Wildfire Projects with amendments as discussed.

For (8): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Carried (8 to 0)

#### **5.7 Executive Director Update Report**

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

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

### **6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS**

Vice Chair Chris Bubser provided an update on the strategic planning process that the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Council was going through.

Board Member John Wentworth reported that TOML's strategic priorities included public safety, community investment, recreation amenities, and effectively delivering municipal services.

TOML Town Manager Rob Patterson said that the Town was focused on actionable items, such as wildfire, parcel level efforts, and wildlife.

Board Member Karen Schwartz reported that the City of Bishop was in the process of doing a parking study to determine peak times to assist with future development. Ms. Schwartz announced that Hilton Hotels had submitted plans to build a hotel next to Vons and that Inyo County was going to get a Marshalls.

Board Member Lynda Salcido reported that Mono County had been working on housing initiatives and said that the four units they had purchased in Bridgeport were ready to go and that they had purchased another property with a home on it. Ms. Salcido provided an update on the jail, said that three Mono County Supervisors would attend the upcoming National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in DC, and said that the County was trying to staff up.

Board Member Paul McFarland said that Mono County's Sustainable Recreation Division was looking for ways to sustain visitor services which their Federal partners usually provide. Mr. McFarland reported they had lost ten full-time employees on the Inyo National Forest and at least five on Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest.

Chair Stephen Muchovej said that he was excited that the Western facades were coming down in Bishop and the buildings would be restored back to what they originally looked like.

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

**7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Board Member John Wentworth requested that a discussion regarding the impact that the lack of staffing at Yosemite National Park would have on this summer's visitation at a future meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

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Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk