



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

**Minutes of Special Meeting**

**April 30, 2025, 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 Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland

Members Absent: Board Member Trina Orrill

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

Chair Stephen Muchovej called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chambers at 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA. Vice Chair Chris Bubser and Board Member Lynda Salcido attended the meeting from the Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers at 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes, CA.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member Karen Schwartz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments given at this time.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

Board Member Paul McFarland requested that Item 4.4 be pulled from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth  
Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (7): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Absent (1): Board Member Trina Orrill

Carried (7 to 0)

**4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 26, 2025**

**4.2 Approve the Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium 2024-2025 Audit**

**4.3 Receive the Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Activities Report**

**4.4 Receive the ESCOG Wildfire Coordinator Report**

Board Member Paul McFarland requested that this item be pulled from consent for further discussion.

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

Inyo County County Administrative Officer Nate Greenberg and Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator Kristen Pfeiler provided additional information.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Inyo County staff, and members of the Board.

**5. POLICY MATTERS**

**5.1 Receive a Presentation on the Final Towns-to-Trails Feasibility Analysis**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala introduced the item and reported that a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption had been filed for this project.

Alta Planning + Design, Inc. Senior Design Associate Tim Bevins outlined the information in the Town to Trails presentation and the Eastern Sierra Town to Trails Feasibility Study for Inyo, Alpine, and Mono Counties.

Vice Chair Chris Bubser read a comment she had received from Lynn Boulton stating that there were errors on the map that should be corrected

before it is published, including some campgrounds that do not exist and the Burger's Retreat.

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

Staff was given direction to remove the narrative description in Appendix 1 in the Towns to Trails Feasibility Study.

**5.2 Receive a Presentation on Eastern Sierra Community Housing Silver Peaks Affordable Housing Project and Approve a Letter of Support for the Silver Peaks Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Application**

Eastern Sierra Community Housing Executive Director Patricia Robertson outlined the information in the Silver Peaks Presentation.

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

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Approve the Letter of Support for the Silver Peaks Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Application.

For (7): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Absent (1): Board Member Trina Orrill

Carried (7 to 0)

**5.3 1) Approve Subaward Agreements between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Funding Awards and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute the Agreements:**

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 Board Member Paul McFarland

Approve the following Subaward Agreements between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Funding Awards and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute the Agreements: a) Subaward Agreement No. SBC-2025202 “Business Resource Center Catalyst Program”, b) Subaward Agreement No. SBC-2025203 “Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis”, c) Subaward Agreement No. SBC2025204 “Eastern Sierra Regional Collaborative Capacity Incubator”. Authorize the Executive Director to Prepare and Issue Requests for Proposals for Consultants and Contractors to Execute the Scope of Work for the Subaward Agreements.

For (7): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Absent (1): Board Member Trina Orrill

Carried (7 to 0)

**5.4 Approve the Agreement Between the County of Inyo and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for the Provision of Project Management, GIS, and Grant Administration Services**

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

Inyo County County Administrator Nate Greenberg provided additional information and discussed the capacity within the County for this project.

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Rob Patterson provided additional information about how the administrative roles in the region could support this project within their agencies and acknowledged the work that had been done so far.

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

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths  
Seconded by Board Member Paul McFarland

Approve the Agreement Between the County of Inyo and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for the Provision of Project Management, Geographic Information System (GIS), and Grant Administration Services.

For (7): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Absent (1): Board Member Trina Orrill

Carried (7 to 0)

**5.5 Approve Memorandum of Understanding Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Sierra Business Council Regarding Implementation of the Sierra Jobs First Business Catalyst Program**

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 Paul McFarland  
Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Approve the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Sierra Business Council Regarding Implementation of the Sierra Jobs First Business Catalyst Program as amended to include the term to be concurrent to the Sierra Jobs First Funding Opportunity on August 31, 2026.

For (7): Chair Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair Chris Bubser, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Paul McFarland

Absent (1): Board Member Trina Orrill

Carried (7 to 0)

**5.6 Executive Director Update Report**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala added that as part of the work that the ESCOG was doing in support of wildfire capacity expansion was to participate in

conversations with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and all the partners in Mono County around the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resiliency Project (ESCCRP) including a discussion on planning for a Biomass facility in the Eastern Sierra, and reported that an opportunity came up yesterday with an organization that had a specialty in Biomass facility planning for forest service feedstock aggregation through California Law Empowering Renewable Energy (CLERE) which had some funding to bring to the Eastern Sierra to assist in this process.

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

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

This item was taken out of order.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that he had met with some of Inyo County's tribal partners and said that the Head Start Program was being completely eliminated, the Tribal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) employees had been laid off, said that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) was gone, and voiced concern over how Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action (IMACA) could continue. Mr. Griffiths said that he had met with Governor Newsom on Friday, and said that funding would now be more local and regional, making ESCOG more valuable.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths left the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Board Member Lynda Salcido reported that she attended the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Conference last weekend and provided an update on the topics and cuts that had been discussed. Ms. Salcido said that the Eastern Sierra was in better condition financially, and also as it relates to homelessness, than many other counties across the State and reported that there was a decision yesterday for a \$4B payout in the Los Angeles County lawsuit.

Vice Chair Chris Bubser announced that there was a groundbreaking ceremony at 3:00 p.m. today for the Southern Mono Healthcare District in Mammoth and reported that the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR) and Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD) Wildfire Task Force had done a lot of work on fire mitigation within the Town's boundaries.

Board Member John Wentworth said that it had become apparent to the Town that they would have to put money into wildfire mitigation. Mr. Wentworth reported that there was an Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership

(ESSRP) meeting coming up on Monday and said that he thought it would be good for the members of the Board to attend it.

Board Member Paul McFarland reported that the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps program had been eliminated recently which impacted several organizations throughout Inyo and Mono Counties. Mr. McFarland said that he had met with several others at the Small Business Resources Center to discuss the potential of creating a Community Foundation for Inyo and Mono Counties with the goal of building resiliency within the region, and reported that Mono County Sheriff Ingrid Braun attended the last Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting and presented a study on dispatch improvements and discussed the potential creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for the region to share dispatch resources, employ certified medical dispatchers, and for asset training.

Board Member Karen Schwartz reported that the City of Bishop was looking to build a new wastewater treatment plant, combining services with the Eastern Sierra Community Services District and bringing the Tribe into the Bishop Area Wastewater Authority (BAWA). Ms. Schwartz said that they had recently received an engineering report outlining various types of treatment plants and recommendations.

Chair Stephen Muchovej reported that the Local Transportation Commission (LTC) for Inyo County had changed their priorities to improve local streets.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

**7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items requested.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled to be held on June 25,2025.

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Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk