



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

### Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 27, 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 Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland

---

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

Chair Stephen Muchovej 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 in the Town of Mammoth Lakes 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 John Wentworth  
Seconded by Board Member Paul McFarland

Approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Carried (7 to 0)

**4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 25, 2025**

**4.2 Receive and File the Approved Fair Political Practices Commission Conflict of Interest Code**

**4.3 Receive ESCOG Wildfire Coordinator Report**

**5. POLICY MATTERS**

**5.1 Receive a Presentation from Nick Buckmaster, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Supervisor regarding the Eastern Sierra Golden Mussels Regional Strategy**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Fisheries Supervisor Nick Buckmaster and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) Watershed Resources Specialist Lori Dermody outlined the information in the Eastern Sierra Golden Mussels Regional Strategy.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths joined the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

There was discussion between CDFW staff and members of the Board.

**5.2 Receive a Presentation from Scott Armstrong, Inyo Mono Broadband Coordinator**

Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) Coordinator Scott Armstrong outlined the information in the 2025 Summer Broadband Update.

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

**5.3 Receive Budget Narrative for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 ESCOG Budget**

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

Staff was given direction to publish the ESCOG's budget narrative in coordination with that of the member agencies moving forward.

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

**5.4 Establish Ad Hoc Committee for Project Oversight of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala announced that the Ad Hoc Committee for Consultants and Contracts had selected contractor Ken Etzel to support the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative (ESRC), and had also requested that an Ad Hoc Committee for Project Oversight of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative be established.

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

Moved by Board Member Paul McFarland

Seconded by Board Member John Wentworth

Direct staff to appoint members of the Board to the Ad Hoc Committee for Project Oversight of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative.

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

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.5 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**

Board Member John Wentworth announced that the Sierra Jobs First Shindig would kick off a three-day event starting on September 10th at 9:00 a.m. at the Cerro Coso Community College Campus in Bishop. Mr. Wentworth reported that there was a proposed reorganization of the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as part of the Federal budget process that could affect our region. He said that the Golden Mussel project was a great opportunity for the ESCOG to use the Visitor Connection Package they had put together and said that Whitebark, with a grant from CalFire, was able to get messaging out through all the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and other existing channels on this topic. He commended the ESCOG and others on the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance work, and

provided an update on the Golden State Connect grant that the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) had received to improve broadband infrastructure. He said that Air Service in the region was stable and growing and reported that Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) had been in discussions with the Paiute Tribe who had expressed an interest in investing in air service. He reported that MLT had a Chatbot on their website now, and that they had reported that the international travel market had been soft.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that he had been doing his presidential visits of counties around California and said that there were a lot of counties with big problems and that we were doing okay in our region. He said he had been working with the House of Representatives (H.R.) One Bill also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, and what the impacts to CalFresh, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and Medi-Cal at Inyo County's level would be. He said that on the County Admin side there would be a fairly dramatic increase in the workload of the eligibility workers, and that a lot of people would lose their coverage, and there may be some who were eligible but may not get coverage because they were unaware of the paperwork needed. He also reported that the amount of food that was coming into Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action's (IMACA) system had dropped dramatically as well as other food and supplemental nutrition programs in the area.

Chris Bubser spoke about SNAP and the effect it would have on our children when that benefit goes away and said she would like to find a way for the ESCOG to help, along with the City of Bishop and TOML.

Chair Stephen Muchovej provided an update on the City of Bishop's Main Street project, and said that the City was preparing to kick off its water and sewer rate study. Chair Muchovej invited all to say goodbye to retiring County Administrative Officer (CAO) Deston Dishion.

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 10:22 a.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled to be held on October 22, 2025.

---

Angela Plaisted  
Administrative Coordinator