



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

Minutes of Regular Meeting

February 4, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes

Members Present: Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Dan Totheroh, Board Member Jim Ellis, Board Member Lynda Salcido

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Karen Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes. The members of the Board attended the meeting via videoconference.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Member Jim Ellis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths joined the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments given at this time.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Board Member Stacy Corless

Seconded by Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve the Consent Agenda

For (8): Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Dan Totheroh, Board Member Jim Ellis, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (8 to 0)

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2021

4.2 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2022

4.3 Consideration of a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Regarding the Need for Continued Virtual Meetings to Protect Public Health

4.4 Ratify Letter Regarding Providing Comments on the Community Economic Resiliency Fund Sent January 28, 2022

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Receive a Presentation from Tim Golden, Bishop Climbers Coalition

Executive Director Elaine Kabala introduced Bishop Climbers Coalition Director of Special Projects Bishop Climbing Ranger Tim Golden. Mr. Golden outlined the information in the Climbing Ranger Program Overview and Updates PowerPoint presentation.

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

5.2 Call for Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Assistant Clerk Angela Plaisted announced that per the bylaws, it was time for the ESCOG to select a new Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Plaisted asked the members of the Board for nominations for the position of Chair.

Board Member Lynda Salcido nominated Vice Chair John Wentworth for the position of Chair.

Newly appointed Chair John Wentworth announced that Inyo County was next in the rotation for appointment to the position of Vice Chair and asked Board Member Dan Tothoroh if he was interested in the appointment since Board Member Jeff Griffiths had held the position most recently.

Chair John Wentworth nominated Board Member Dan Tothoroh as the Vice Chair of the ESCOG.

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

Moved by Board Member Lynda Salcido
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Appoint Vice Chair John Wentworth as the Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority.

For (8): Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Dan Totheroh, Board Member Jim Ellis, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (8 to 0)

Moved by Vice Chair John Wentworth
Seconded by Chair Karen Schwartz

Appoint Board Member Dan Totheroh as the Vice Chair of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority.

For (8): Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Dan Totheroh, Board Member Jim Ellis, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (8 to 0)

5.3 Discussion and Adoption of Increase in Budget Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

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 Stacy Corless
Seconded by Board Member Bob Gardner

Approve an increase in appropriations by \$650,000 for funds secured by grant revenues and approve an increase in appropriations for principal repayment of the Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC) line of credit and an equal increase in revenue for the issuance of the RCRC line of credit.

For (8): Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Dan Totheroh, Board Member Jim Ellis, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (8 to 0)

5.4 Discussion and Direction Regarding Visitor Connection Package Funding

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report and the Eastern Sierra Visitor Connection Program PowerPoint presentation.

Vice Chair Dan Totheroh left the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler said that the area managers had not discussed this item, but had discussed additional funding for the ESCOG. Mr. Holler reported that there was a regional manager's meeting scheduled to be held on February 18th to discuss various regional items, and asked for additional details regarding the structure, time frame and amount of the funding request to the member agencies. He reported that recent TOML and Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) discussions had a large focus on education and sustainability not just visitor attraction marketing. Mr. Holler said that Alpine County had been invited to the area manager's discussion group.

Inyo County County Administrative Officer Leslie Chapman said that the role of the administrators, and County and City Management, related to the ESCOG was to review presentations, budgets and allocations and to make recommendations or raise questions. Ms. Chapman said that management could not strongly support an item because they work for their own Boards and the Boards would have to review the facts and vote on whether to participate or not.

Plumas Corporation Southern Sierra Project Manager Janet Hatfield reported that in the "wildfire" world they were struggling with authoritative sources for data and information, as well as common messaging and said that she felt that this program would help with that. Ms. Hatfield said that the ability to have an authoritative stamp on the messaging was important.

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

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Stacy Corless

Approve the ESCOG's support of the Eastern Sierra Visitor Connection Program and recommend that Executive Director Elaine Kabala meet with the member agencies for further refinement and then report back to the ESCOG with recommended next steps.

For (7): Chair Karen Schwartz, Vice Chair John Wentworth, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Jim Ellis, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Absent (1): Board Member Dan Totheroh

Carried (7 to 0)

5.5 Discussion and Direction Regarding ESCOG Strategic Meeting with County and City Administrators

Board Member Karen Schwartz left the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

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

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

CONSENSUS: The Board gave staff direction to convene meetings with the administrators of the four member agencies and to include ESCOG staff in the regular meetings of the County and City Administrators.

5.6 Consideration of a Request for Proposals for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator Project for Environmental Planning Services

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

Chair John Wentworth announced that Plumas Corporation Southern Sierra Project Manager Janet Hatfield was part of the team for this project.

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

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board for staff to notice the Request for Proposals to Provide National Environmental Policy Act Services for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator.

5.7 Discussion and Direction to Staff to Apply for Capacity Funding through the USDA Strategic Economic and Community Development Program

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala reported that she had received a call last night stating that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Sustainable Economic and Community Development (SEDC) program was not appropriate for this funding request. She said that she spoke with another USDA contact who stated that there may be an opportunity appropriate for the project under the program and would get back to her at a later date. She said that she planned to research to see if the Rural Business Development Program was appropriate for this project and asked the Board for consensus of their support for her to submit an application under that program.

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

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board for staff to continue to work with the USDA and Quantified Ventures to continue to investigate other funding opportunities for campground improvements throughout the Eastern Sierra.

5.8 Discussion and Direction Regarding the Citizens Wildfire Task Force

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

Board Member Bob Gardner provided additional details regarding the Citizens Wildfire Academy (CWA).

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

CONSENSUS: Staff was given direction to support coordination and outreach for the (CWA).

5.9 Receive an Update on Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program Activities

Executive Director Elaine Kabala provided an update on Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program (SREMP) Activities. Ms. Kabala reported that the ESCOG had received a conditional award from the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative (BIRPI) and said that she was working on related administrative items which she planned to bring forward at the next meeting of the ESCOG.

Ms. Kabala said that she anticipated the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Town to Trails Plan Award to be announced in March, and that the Whitebark Institute was now under contract for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator.

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

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Lynda Salcido left the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths provided an air service update. Mr. Griffiths said that winter service would end on March 26th with a possible start of summer service the first week of June with service to San Francisco or possibly Denver. He reported that the enplanement numbers had been between four hundred and fifty and one thousand sixty-seven departures per week and said that there had been between four hundred and eight hundred arrivals, with only ten cancellations at this point, none of which were due to weather. He reported that Inyo County's redistricting was complete and said that they were now a mountain based district going north, and that the new Congressional Maps were available. He said that he had attended some California State Association of Counties (CSAC) events and reported that Governor Newsom's budget looked like it would have a \$45M surplus and said that the Governor's office was focused on paying down debts, reducing pension obligations and initiating new programs.

Board Member Bob Gardner reported that Mono County's redistricting process had been successful. Mr. Gardner said that he would attend the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference starting on the 12th and said that he would coordinate a working group on Resorts, Tourism and Gateway Counties and noted that Chair Wentworth would give a presentation on housing, along with presenters from other resort towns and said that the City Manager from Avon Colorado, who chairs the Housing Task Force for the Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST), would provide an overview. He said the session would be recorded for those interested that would not be able attend the event. Mr. Gardner said that he was impressed with CAST, which allowed members from ski towns outside of Colorado, and planned to ask Mono County Board of Supervisors to join that group.

Board Member Stacy Corless reported that Mono County was focused on the jail construction project in Bridgeport which would be funded by a \$25M award they had received from the State several years ago.

Ms. Corless said that an agreement with the construction management firm had been approved and additional financing would be discussed at the next Board of Supervisors meeting. She reported that the new facility would be located on County property where the old hospital was located. She reported that through Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) she had spent a lot of time on California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce activities and RCRC Wildfire related activities and said that Governor Newsom's Budget proposal included a lot of funding for wildfire support. She said she recently attended a taskforce meeting and said those meetings were held bi-monthly and were open to the public, and said that she would send a link to the Clerk to forward to the Board.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths added to his report that architects were currently in the process of developing the site plans for the Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center (ESSBRC) and said that the consultant had developed a business plan for the center, and offered to set up a presentation for the ESCOG. Mr. Griffiths reported that Inyo County was working with RCRC on a broadband plan in anticipation of funding that should become available at some point in the future and discussed potential new broadband vendors and technologies. He reported that the recall election of a County Supervisor in Shasta County had been organized by a militia and funded by a billionaire who had funded \$1M of the effort which succeeded.

Board Member Jim Ellis reported that Deston Dishion had been appointed as Acting Interim City Administrator for the City of Bishop. Mr. Ellis said that he had recently flown from Bishop to Denver. He reported that at the Bishop Airport (a.k.a. the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport BIH) there was no outdoor waiting areas where the passengers' luggage came out and said that it had been windy the day he had flown, and several people were waiting outside in the cold. He suggested that wind shelters be built. He also reported that the Bishop Police Department had been busy due to being short staffed, and said that the new Chief of Police had been filling openings. Mr. Ellis reported that the State had placed a large focus on housing, however, they were taking away a lot of the local control and lowering franchise fees. He said that he would attend the League of California Cities Desert Mountain League meeting at the end of the month at which time these issues would be discussed, and he would report back to the group on that conversation.

Chair John Wentworth welcomed Interim CA Dishion and announced that the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) had been notified of an approval for substantial funding for The Parcel from the State, but said that relying on grants for housing would not solve the housing challenge.

Chair Wentworth said that TOML would also utilize funds from Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) for housing and said that as a region we needed to look for ways to generate more revenue. He reported that the Town was in the process of renegotiating its contracts with local Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in an effort to make them more contract based with more specific deliverables. He said that satellites were compromising the night skies, said that the Visitor Connection Program could help engage our visitors without the need to invest in expensive technology, and reported that he was happy that no winter flights had been cancelled due to weather now that commercial flights were landing in Bishop.

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 3:09 p.m. to the next regular meeting schedule to be held on April 8, 2022.



Angela Maisted, Assistant Clerk