



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

### Minutes of Regular Meeting

April 8, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Teleconference Only - No Physical Location

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

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

Chair John Wentworth called the meeting to order at 8:31 p.m. Members of the Board attended the meeting via videoconference.

#### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments given at this time.

#### 4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Board Member Bob Gardner  
Seconded by Board Member Lynda Salcido

Approve the Consent Agenda

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

Absent (1): Board Member Stacy Corless

Carried (7 to 0)

- 4.1 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 4, 2022**
- 4.2 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 4, 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**

5. **POLICY MATTERS**

- 5.1 **Receive a Presentation on the Inyo County Rural County Representatives of California Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Grant, Bishop Business Resource Center and Other Regional Economic Development Activities**

Board Member Stacy Corless joined the meeting at 8:36 a.m.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala introduced Inyo County Assistant County Administrator Meaghan McCamman.

Ms. McCamman shared a PowerPoint presentation outlining economic development opportunities and projects within the region.

Board Member Stacy Corless announced that she would not seek re-election on the Mono County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Corless reported that she had accepted a position with the Sierra Business Council (SBC) as the Government and Community Affairs Director.

**SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:**

SBC Board Chair Allan Pietrasanta said there were great opportunities available in the region and added that SBC had been very active with the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz) tracking developments with the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) Program and advocating for subdivision of the region and equitable distribution of funds.

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

- 5.2 **Discussion and Direction Regarding on Conversations with Regional Management Regarding Future ESCOG Programs of Work**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala requested direction from the Board for staff to draft a resolution with the member agency managers which would empower the

ESCOG to engage in regional economic development and housing opportunities.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Dan Holler spoke about the value of working together as a region.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Mr. Holler, Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla and members of the Board.

Moved by Chair John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Bob Gardner

Direct staff to develop a draft resolution to be presented at the June ESCOG meeting in collaboration with regional leadership, empowering the ESCOG to initiate a program of work related to regional economic development and housing opportunities.

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

Carried (8 to 0)

### **5.3 Discussion and Direction Regarding Inyo National Forest Scope of Work for Inter-agency Coordination**

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

Direct staff to partner with the Inyo National Forest (INF) to establish inter-agency coordination opportunities and procedures and to request funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

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

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.4 Discussion and Direction Regarding Awarding Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator Environmental Planning Services Contract**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report. Ms. Kabala reported that staff had received two responses to the Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator Project for Environmental Management Services. She said that two subcommittees had been formed, one from the ESCOG and one from the Inyo National Forest, and that each had reviewed and scored the proposals, both of which scored well. She thanked the subcommittees for their efforts reviewing the proposals and reported that the subcommittees would conduct interviews on April 15th.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and Board members.

Moved by Vice Chair Dan Totheroh  
Seconded by Board Member Jim Ellis

Authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations with the preferred consultant recommended by the subcommittees and return to the Board with a finalized agreement for approval at a subsequent date.

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

Carried (8 to 0)

**5.5 Consideration of Contract Amendment#3 for Administrative Services with Elaine Kabala (Eastern Sierra Planning, LLC)**

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

Vice Chair Dan Totheroh pointed out that the requested contract extension date in the staff report should be corrected to state through October 15, 2022 rather than 2021.

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

Moved by Board Member Karen Schwartz  
Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Approve Amendment Number 3 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and Eastern Sierra Planning, LLC for the Provision of Administrative Services.

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

Carried (8 to 0)

#### **5.6 Discussion and Direction Regarding Future In-Person and Virtual ESCOG Board Meetings**

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla updated the Board on the status of Assembly Bill 361 (AB 361) and two pieces of pending legislation regarding in person and remote meetings. Ms. Chuchla discussed the option of offering multiple physical locations for future ESCOG meetings, which would allow members of the Board, as well as the public, the option of attending the meetings in the Bishop Council Chambers or the Town of Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers.

There was discussion among Ms. Chuchla, Executive Director Elaine Kabala, and members of the Board.

CONSENSUS: There was consensus among the Board to continue to make remote public participation a top priority, and that members of the Board would make a commitment to attend meetings in person. It was decided that the members of the Board would attend the June meeting in person in the Bishop Council Chambers and that the Town of Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers would also be open to the public for in person and/or remote participation.

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

Executive Director Elaine Kabala updated the Board on the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative (BIRPI) and the Towns to Trails project. Ms. Kabala announced that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy would hold their first in person meeting on June 1st and 2nd in Mammoth Lakes, and spoke about potentially holding a bi-monthly or quarterly regional housing roundtable. Ms. Kabala thanked Inyo County and Inyo

County Assistant Clerk of the Board, Darcy Ellis, for clerking today's meeting.

**6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS**

Chair John Wentworth reported that housing continued to be the number one priority in Mammoth Lakes and gave an update on housing and other development projects. Chair Wentworth announced that the Town of Mammoth Lakes had hired Inyo National Forest Mammoth Lakes Ranger District Recreation Officer Lawson Reif to serve as the Manager of their new Office of Outdoor Recreation. He said the weather had been nice but it was expected to snow on Monday.

Board Member Lynda Salcido gave an update on the Residence Inn project in Mammoth, the Sierra Nevada Resort remodel and the Community Recreation Center (CRC).

Board Member Bob Gardner reported that he had worked with Executive Director Elaine Kabala and Mono County Public Information Officer Justin Caporusso last week to get a press release out about the virtual Citizen's Wildfire Education Academy. Mr. Gardner announced that there would be monthly virtual academies and that the program had received support from several agencies including all of the ESCOG's member agencies and Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT).

Board Member Stacy Corless said Mono County's new Housing Opportunities Manager Sanjay Choudhrie had started work and was getting the lay of the land. Ms. Corless added that she had recently participated in U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Region 5 Roundtables regarding the USFS' implementation of a 10-year strategy to discuss the wildfire crisis.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths said the first winter season of commercial air service at the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (a.k.a. the Bishop Airport) went well and that the airport was on its way to meeting the 10,000 enplanement mark for 2022 which would make them eligible for the \$1M annual entitlement funding grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Mr. Griffiths reported that there had been no weather related delays or cancellations, but mentioned there had been passengers temporarily stranded at the airport when U.S. Highway 395 was closed during a snowstorm. He provided an update on summer, winter and 2023 air service, as well as an update on the terminal. He reported that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors had passed a Dark Sky Ordinance, said that the Round Valley Bridge was in the process of being rebuilt, said that Inyo County had three competitive elections coming up, and spoke about an active Broadband Task Force they had with a planning grant through Rural Counties

Representatives of California (RCRC). Mr. Griffiths announced that Inyo County Health and Human Services would host a Resiliency Symposium in two weeks, reported that Anthem and Health Net were both interested in becoming Inyo County's managed Medi-Cal plan provider, and said that Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action (IMACA) was appreciative of the financial aid from the four ESCOG member agencies and that they had made great strides in stabilizing their finances. He said that Inyo County had lost its eminent domain California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit which entitled the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to recoup legal fees, spoke about recycling and composting, said the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) and local Tribal Historic Preservation Officers were collaborating on a Patsiata Historic District designation for Owens Lake, and said that the dismal April 1st snowpack report could have serious implications for the fire season and LADWP's water allotments to agricultural entities. Mr. Griffiths announced that this Sunday was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the Inyo County Courthouse.

Vice Chair Dan Tothoroh said the Dark Sky Ordinance only required property owners to replace their lighting if it was negatively affecting a neighbor. Mr. Tothoroh added that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors would meet in Tecopa on April 19th, and announced that there was a free Celtic music concert scheduled to be held at Bishop High School on Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

Board Member Karen Schwartz reported that the City of Bishop had expanded the fence around the park pool to include grass and shade. Ms. Schwartz said that she and Interim City Administrator Deston Dishion had met with a governmental affairs official from Frontier who reported they would upgrade and expand their infrastructure in Bishop to compete with Suddenlink. She added that internal conversations about housing issues were continuing as rental prices continued to rise to new levels.

Board Member Jim Ellis said a sign ordinance would come before the City Council on Monday. Mr. Ellis reported that the City Council and staff had recently held a strategic planning meeting which was a chance for everyone to get on the same page about future priorities, and said that discussions about housing issues were continuing.

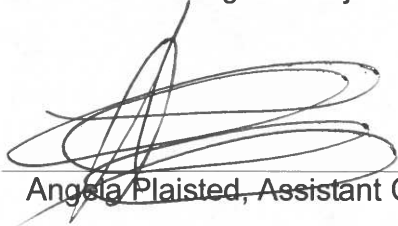
There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. **REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chair John Wentworth requested an item be added to a future agenda to discuss air service in relation to the upcoming Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) renewal.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Plaisted', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat scribbled.

Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk