



**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

**Friday, May 15, 2020
8:30 a.m.
437 Old Mammoth Road, Ste. 230
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546**

Board Members

Mono County Supervisor Stacy Corless –Chair	Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths
Mono County Supervisor Bob Gardner	Inyo County Supervisor Dan Totheroh
Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember Lynda Salcido	City of Bishop Councilmember Jim Ellis
Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember John Wentworth	City of Bishop Councilmember Karen Schwartz – Vice Chair

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Stacy Corless.

3. Roll Call

Chair Stacy Corless, and Board Members Bob Gardner, Lynda Salcido, John Wentworth, Jeff Griffiths, Dan Totheroh, and Jim Ellis were present via videoconference. Vice Chair Karen Schwartz was absent.

4. Public Comment

There was a public comment from Mammoth Lakes Housing (MLH) Executive Director Patricia Robertson dated May 14, 2020 emailed to the ESCOG Secretary regarding the rent relief program they were operating and announcing an open position on the MLH Board.

There was a public comment from Holly Alpert of Bishop and Rick Kattelmann of Sunny Slopes dated May 14, 2020 emailed to the ESCOG Secretary regarding wildfire mitigation efforts in Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties.

Chair Stacy Corless suggested that Holly Alpert and Rick Kattelmann be invited to a future meeting to give an update on wildfire mitigation efforts.

5. Approve the Minutes of the February 14, 2020 special meeting of the ESCOG JPA.

This item was taken out of order, after item #11.

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths, seconded by Board Member Dan Totheroh, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7-0 roll call vote to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2020 special meeting.

6. Approve Legal Services Agreement between Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority and the County of Inyo. Legal Services to be provided through Inyo County's County Counsel's Office at an estimated cost of eight hundred and thirty-three dollars (\$833) per month.

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

Inyo County Counsel Marshall Rudolph introduced Inyo County Deputy County Counsel Grace Chuchla and announced that she would act as Lead Counsel for the ESCOG JPA. Mr. Rudolph spoke about the Legal Services Agreement between Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority and the County of Inyo and discussed how the proposed monthly fee had been determined.

There was discussion between Mr. Rudolph, Mr. Holler and members of the Board.

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Bob Gardner, seconded by Board Member John Wentworth, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7 - 0 roll call vote to approve the Legal Services Agreement between Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority and the County of Inyo.

7. Discussion and possible adoption of the ESCOG JPA Draft Bylaws.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

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

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Bob Gardner, seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7 -0 roll call vote to approve the ESCOG JPA Draft Bylaws.

8. Discussion and staff direction regarding the adoption of the resolution announcing the intent to adopt an initial Conflict of Interest Code for the ESCOG JPA.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

Inyo County Counsel Marshall Rudolph spoke about the necessity for the ESCOG JPA to adopt a Conflict of Interest Code and the required forty-five-day public comment period. Mr. Rudolph outlined the information in the proposed Conflict of Interest Code and said that a Notice of Proposed Conflict of Interest Code would need to be posted.

There was discussion between Mr. Rudolph, Inyo County Deputy County Counsel Grace Chuchla, Mr. Holler and members of the Board.

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths, seconded by Board Member John Wentworth, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7-0 roll call vote to approve adoption of the resolution announcing the intent to adopt an initial Conflict of Interest Code for the ESCOG JPA.

9. Discussion and possible adoption of the ESCOG JPA Fiscal Year 2019/20 Budget.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

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

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths, seconded by Board Member John Wentworth, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7 - 0 roll call vote to approve adoption of the ESCOG JPA Fiscal Year 20019/20 Budget.

10. Discussion and possible adoption of the ESCOG JPA Fiscal Year 2020/21 Budget.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Mr. Holler, Inyo County Deputy County Counsel Grace Chuchla and members of the Board.

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Bob Gardner, seconded by Board Member Lynda Salcido, with Vice Chair Karen Schwartz absent, and carried by 7-0 roll call vote to approve adoption of the ESCOG JPA 2020/21 Budget.

11. Discussion and Direction (action) on COVID-19 regional impacts and response include decisions and actions by other public land managers and state commissions or agencies.

This item was taken out of order.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler outlined the information in the staff report.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Inyo National Forest (INF) White Mountain Director Phillip DeSenze spoke about the regional site closures which were extended through June 30, 2020. He stated that the date could be rescinded or amended at any time. Mr. DeSenze reported that campground hosts for concessionaire run campgrounds would be allowed to enter the forests starting May 16th to begin repairs and provide additional maintenance. He said that he was hopeful that some campgrounds would be open on June 1st and reported that additional staff would report to work after Memorial Day, and notes that employees that had come from out of the area would be required to quarantine for fourteen days. Mr. DeSenze said that additional INF operated campgrounds could potentially open on June 15th if all went well and if they had met government requirements. He reported that a related order should be signed, and a press release issued on May 15th. Mr. DeSenze spoke about the possibility to bifurcate Inyo County areas from Mono County if Inyo met the requirements first. He reported that backcountry guides and pack stations had been allowed to start preparing for reopening and said that INF had suspended wilderness permits through May 31st, but was unsure if that date would be extended.

There was discussion between Mr. DeSenze, Mr. Holler and members of the Board.

Chair Stacy Corless reported that there was tremendous interest in fishing opening up in Northern Mono County prior to the June 1st extension that the Board had previously requested. Chair Corless authorized an ad hoc committee to collaborate with Inyo County with regard to moving the date up.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that he would be open to the idea of moving up the fishing opener as long as the prohibition on short term rentals was still in place to protect the County from a large number of people coming up from Southern California.

Board Member Dan Tothorh voiced concerns about the number of people that would likely come to the area for the fishing opener and the fact that there would be nowhere to house them if there was still a ban on short term rentals and no open campgrounds.

Inyo County Administrative Officer Clint Quilter reported that he would go to the Inyo County Board of Supervisors to propose that they submit a letter requesting a variance to move into Stage 2. Mr. Quilter described the progress that had been made on obtaining attestations from local businesses.

Chair Corless reported that Mono County's Public Health Officer and Mammoth Hospital were comfortable with the attestation for the variance. She announced that the Mono County Board of Supervisors would meet at 9:00 a.m. on May 18th to potentially approve the letter of support attestation.

Acting Mono County Administrative Officer Bob Lawton spoke about the readiness to move forward with attestation for Stage 2.

Board Member John Wentworth reported that he felt the County needed to get campgrounds and short-term rentals figured out if moving up the Fishing Opener date.

Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Incident Commander Frank Frievalt spoke about the balance between the economic effects of not moving forward with the Fishing Opener and avoiding a resurgence. Mr. Frievalt referred members of the Board to the California COVID website that showed the number of cases per County with the largest by far being Los Angeles County which was our core drive market.

Jeff Griffiths requested that a unified regional message be prepared for visitors and the business community regarding safety, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) practices and compliance to ensure that the Eastern Sierra was a safe place to visit.

There was discussion between Mr. Lawton, Mr. Quilter, Commander Frievalt, Mr. Holler and members of the Board.

Ms. Corless announced that Alpine had opened for Trout Fishing on May 15th. She reported that Bodie State Park had approached the Board with direction to open on May 16th. Ms. Corless said that the Mono County Sheriff Department had offered support and said that there was discussion of a soft open for Bodie State Park and Mono Lakes Tufa State National Reserve with no advertising.

Board Member Bob Gardner reported that Bodie State Park was not properly staffed at this time to move forward with an open date on May 16th. Mr. Gardner also discussed safety concerns.

Commander Frievalt spoke about utilizing the Public Information Officer (PIO) group and local marketing agencies to coordinate a unified regionwide message regarding the safety of visiting Mono County and welcoming visitors back to the region, while promoting consumer confidence. He reported that there would be an online portal created to assist local businesses with self-reporting followed by printing the mandatory certification of compliance which was required to be posted in all open businesses. He said that the site would provide a list of all businesses that had met the compliance requirements.

Ms. Corless reported that she had participated in the Yosemite Area Coordination Group meetings with regard to messaging and reopening as they move forward into Stage 2 and later into Stage 3.

Mr. Wentworth announced that the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) would meet on June 1st to discuss dispersed camping and managing various openings.

Mr. Holler spoke about dispersed camping and reported that the Mono County short-term rental ban would expire on May 31st and said there had been discussions as to whether that would need to be extended.

Mr. Frievalt announced that there would be a conference call on May 18th with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) with regard to the attestation process seeking to have Mono County separated out into unincorporated and incorporated areas.

Mr. Griffiths reported that Inyo County would have a meeting on May 15th at 12:00 p.m. with the CDPH.

There was discussion between Mr. Holler, Mr. Lawton, Commander Frievalt and members of the Board.

CONSENSUS: There was consensus by the Board for all member agencies to work together with regard to short term rentals, the Fishing Opener, Campgrounds: Public, Federal, State and private, and RV Parks, and to define the recreation and tourism messaging expectation.

12. Board Member Reports on Local, Regional, State and Federal matters related to ESCOG JPA interests.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler asked if there were any reports regarding the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and if there was an Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) report with regard to air service. Mr. Holler announced that commercial flights into the Mammoth Yosemite Airport for the summer had been cancelled.

TOML Public Works Director Grady Dutton gave an update regarding ESTA services and reported that there would be a request submitted to the ESTA Board to cancel shuttle service to Red's Meadow for the year.

Board Member John Wentworth reported that the TOML Town Council would meet next week to consider various important budget items and stated that he and Board Member Lynda Salcido served on the Local Transportation Commission (LTC). Mr. Wentworth announced that Ryan Dermody had been appointed as the new Region 9 Caltrans Director and reported that Caltrans was doing an origination study of traffic to and from the Eastern Sierra. He also spoke about ESTA staffing. Mr. Wentworth said that the Town was anticipating good news related to funding for The Parcel.

Chair Corless announced that Mono County personnel would be moving into the new Civic Center soon and thanked the staff for their work.

There was discussion between Mr. Holler, Mr. Dutton and members of the Board.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled on June 12, 2020.