



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

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**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

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**Friday, October 16, 2020**

**8:30 a.m.**

**Mammoth Lakes Council Chamber  
437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z  
Mammoth Lakes, CA**

*NOTE: This will be a Zoom meeting and will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Governor's Executive Order which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act. It is strongly encouraged that you watch this meeting on the Town of Mammoth Lakes' (TOML) website at [www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov](http://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov) or on TOML's local government cable channel 18.*

**Public comments may be submitted to the TOML Assistant Clerk at [clerk@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov](mailto:clerk@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov) before and during the meeting.**

**Board Members**

Mono County Supervisor  
Stacy Corless – Chair

Mono County Supervisor  
Bob Gardner

Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember  
Lynda Salcido

Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember  
John Wentworth

Inyo County Supervisor  
Jeff Griffiths

Inyo County Supervisor  
Dan Totheroh

City of Bishop Councilmember  
Jim Ellis

City of Bishop Councilmember  
Karen Schwartz – Vice Chair

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting please contact the Clerk of the Board at 760-965-3603. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City of Bishop or Town of Mammoth Lakes to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (See 42 USCS 12132, 28CFR 35.130). NOTE: Comments for all agenda items are limited to a speaking time of three minutes.

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m.

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Dan Holler requested that some items on the agenda be taken out of order.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Stacy Corless led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Roll Call**

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

**4. Public Comment**

There was a public comment received via email from Mammoth Lakes Housing Executive Director Patricia Robertson with an update on the success of the Rental Assistance Payment program.

**5. Approve the Minutes of the August 14, 2020 meeting of the ESCOG JPA.**

ACTION: It was moved by Board Member Karen Schwartz, seconded by Board Member Bob Gardner, and carried by an 8– 0 roll call vote to approve the Minutes of the August 14, 2020 meeting of the ESCOG JPA.

**6. Discussion and possible action on Liability Insurance and Requested Quote.**

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla reported that the purchase of an insurance policy did not require action by the Board due to the Mammoth Lakes purchasing policy which was also followed by the ESCOG. Ms. Chuchla said that the policy authorized Town Manager Dan Holler to purchase insurance on behalf of the ESCOG without a specific resolution from the Board. She outlined the information in the Special Liability Insurance Program (SIPL) insurance proposal and recommended that Cyber Liability be added to the policy for an additional cost of \$250-\$300 per year. Ms. Chuchla reported that Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala was not covered under the proposed policy and said that it was determined to be unnecessary to cover her at this time and noted that there was an indemnification provision in which Ms. Kabala promised to indemnify any harm that she as an independent contractor may cause.

Ms. Kabala said that she would look into securing her own insurance.

Mr. Holler requested that the members of the Board authorize him to move forward with the policy and reported that he would be the one to execute the agreement.

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

CONSENSUS: There was consensus from the Board for Mr. Holler to execute the purchase of the Special Liability Insurance Program (SLIP) Insurance Proposal with the addition of Cyber Liability.

**7. Updated Financial Report provided by Mono County Finance Director Janet Dutcher.**

This item was taken out of order.

Mono County Finance Director Janet Dutcher outlined the information in the staff report and Financial Statements.

**8. Discussion and possible action on report and recommendation from subcommittee on the hiring of Elaine Kabala as an Administrative Services Contractor for the ESCOG JPA following the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process and recommend entry into a contract with Ms. Kabala for an amount not to exceed \$25,000.**

This item was taken out of order.

Board Member John Wentworth spoke about the steps that were taken in the recruitment process for an Administrative Services Contractor for the ESCOG.

Board Member Jim Ellis spoke about the recruitment process and thanked Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla for her assistance. Mr. Ellis said the interview with Elaine Kabala went well and reported that he was in favor of securing Ms. Kabala for the position.

Ms. Chuchla described the requested action for this agenda item and gave a description of the proposed contract between the ESCOG and Ms. Kabala.

Elaine Kabala introduced herself and said that she was grateful for the Board's consideration of her to fill the position and said that she looked forward to working with the Board.

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

**ACTION:** It was moved by Board Member Bob Gardner, seconded by Board Member John Wentworth, and carried by an 8-0 roll call vote to approve the Contract to hire Elaine Kabala as the Administrative Services Contractor for the ESCOG.

**9. Discussion and adoption of Resolution to initiate ESCOG JPA Sustainable Recreation and Forest Management (SRFM) Program.**

This item was taken out of order.

Board Member John Wentworth spoke about the State of California Shared Stewardship Agreement with the Forest Service, the Great American Outdoors Act which had been enacted by the Federal Government, the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) and the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative (SRTI). Mr. Wentworth announced that efforts had started with regard to a planning grant for fuels work in Mammoth Lakes. He outlined the information in the resolution and thanked Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla and TOML Town Manager Dan Holler for their assistance preparing the resolution.

Board Member Bob Gardner spoke about the reason the ESCOG became a JPA and said that doing so enabled the ESCOG to pursue and receive grants for projects such as the SRFM Program. Mr. Gardner reported that each member agency must approve the Sustainable Recreation and Forest Management Program after the ESCOG had approved it in order to move forward.

Chair Stacy Corless suggested changing the name of the program to be broadened to include Wildfire Prevention or Natural Resource Management.

Plumas Project Manager Janet Hatfield introduced herself and spoke about the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project (ESCCRP) which she had been working on. Ms Hatfield said her focus was in the Mammoth Lakes area. She thanked the ESCOG for their interest and desire to assist with this program.

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program Project Development Specialist Rick Kattelmann introduced himself and spoke about the ESCCRP. Mr. Kattelmann spoke in favor of the ESCOG's creation of the Sustainable Recreation and Forest Management Program. He discussed the Regional Capacity Program's focus on local communities and the unique needs of Mammoth Lakes and Alpine. Mr. Kattelmann recommended bundling small projects together into one application for better success with grant awards.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths requested additional details about the benefits of the SRFM Program to all of the member agencies not just the Mammoth Lakes area so the ESCOG Board Members would be well-equipped to relay that information to their individual agencies.

Mr. Gardner spoke about potential campground funding that would benefit the entire region via grants applied for through this program.

Mr. Wentworth spoke about the wide variety of projects that would be accessible to the region through the SRFM Program

Holly Alpert, Independent Contractor for the Eastern California Water Association and Grant Manager for the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Grant through Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) introduced herself and spoke about the work that she had done with Mr. Kattlemann and Ms. Hatfield. She said that her group had been soliciting projects and were getting ready to prioritize the projects they had received. Ms. Alpert spoke about ecosystems management.

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla discussed amending the resolution per the recommendations received from the Board and including additional revisions from the authors of the resolution.

Board Member Jim Ellis recommended removing the word Forest and replacing it with Ecosystem in the title of the resolution.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler spoke in favor of the resolution and mentioned that there were no financial commitment requirements from the member agencies or the ESCOG to pass the resolution. Mr. Holler stated that if there were costs in the future the ESCOG would need to approach the member agencies at that time.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Board Member John Wentworth, seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths, and carried by a 8-0 roll call vote to approve the Resolution as written to initiate the ESCOG JPA Sustainable Recreation and Forest Management Program with a change to the title to include Ecosystem Management as a replacement for Forest Management and to direct the authors of the resolution to provide a definition of Ecosystem Management seeking input from members of the ESCOG as identified including Supervisors Jeff Griffiths and Bob Gardner, as well as input from Rick Kattlemann, Janet Hatfield and Holly Alpert and others who may have specific expertise in that matter.

Chair Corless spoke about a Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) project that would deal with forest biomass and develop pellet manufacturing.

There was discussion between Ms. Hatfield, Mr. Kattlemann, Ms. Alpert, Mr. Holler and members of the Board.

#### **10. Update on the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP).**

This item was combined with Item number 11.

Board Member John Wentworth gave an update on recent ESSRP activities and the Proposition 68/Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative (SRTI) Grant. Mr. Wentworth discussed the effects of the Creek Fire. He said that the Visitor Connection Working Group had met on October 15th and reported that there would be a proposal for a project for the Voice of the Eastern Sierra. Mr. Wentworth announced that the SRTI would continue to accept project requests through

October 31<sup>st</sup> and would start ranking them on November 19<sup>th</sup>. He also announced that Inyo National Forest Interim Forest Supervisor John Poncho Smith's last day was today and reported that Lesley Yen would start as the Forest Supervisor on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wentworth reported that Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Coordinator (ESSRC) Matt Paruolo was now a Mono County employee not a Mammoth Lakes Recreation employee and reported that the next meeting of the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership was scheduled to be held on November 2nd.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

**11. Update and Brief Presentation on the Prop 68/Sierra Nevada Conservancy's "Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative" Grant administered by the Town of Mammoth Lakes on behalf of regional partners.**

This item was combined with Item #10

**12. Discussion regarding new Grant Opportunities, including USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG).**

This item was not discussed.

**13. Board Member/Agency Reports**

**a. Update on Bishop Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (BIH) Air Service.**

Inyo County County Administrative Officer (CAO) Clint Quilter gave an update on air service at BIH. Mr. Quilter reported that there would be an item on Inyo County's agenda on October 20<sup>th</sup> with regard to awarding the contract for a 100% no match grant they had received for a fire fighting vehicle. He said there would also be an item with a recommendation to the Board to approve a reorganization at the airport to include reclassification of an employee to the position Airport Manager and the addition of the Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) requirements to job descriptions for staff members, as well as hiring additional staff for commercial operations in the future. Mr. Quilter said that he anticipated the airport would be ready for air service July 2021.

**b. Update on housing initiatives**

Board Member Jeff Griffiths gave an update on the Silver Peaks project and the Veterans' Housing Complex. Mr. Griffiths reported that Eastern Sierra Disabled Sports would consider a collaboration of the Wounded Warrior Center with the Veterans' Housing Complex. He spoke about the homeless population in Bishop and reported that the Continuum of Care (CoC) had assisted with homeless issues and had received an award of \$1.7 M from Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for homeless services.

Board Member John Wentworth gave an update on The Parcel project in Mammoth Lakes and announced that there would be a Master Plan meeting in January.

Board Member Lynda Salcido spoke about The Parcel project.

Board Member Bob Gardner gave an update on the Tioga Inn project and reported that the Environmental Impact Review (EIR) had been approved, however, the Board had not approved the plan and had requested additional consultation on the project. Mr. Gardner spoke about the regional homeless issue and the need for solutions.

Board Member Karen Schwartz spoke about a church in Bishop that had allowed homeless community members to utilize their parking lot.

Chair Stacy Corless spoke in support of the plan for permanent supportive housing funded by the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) Housing Program and the No Place Like Home (NPLH) Program to be included in the plans for The Parcel.

There was discussion among members of the Board

**c. Other**

Board Member Jeff Griffith spoke about the recent forest closures and partial re-openings in Inyo County.

Chair Stacy Corless voiced concerns related to dispersed camping in Mammoth.

Board Member Bob Gardner discussed the wilderness area closures in Mono County and the June Lake area. Mr. Gardner spoke about the influx of visitors in the region that had come to view fall colors. He requested a meeting to talk about the future of dispersed camping, fire restrictions, and fees.

Board Member Jim Ellis spoke about the creation of the Sierra Trash Eliminators (STE) group and the success and growth the group had achieved since its inception in July. Mr. Ellis announced the Eastside Facelift event planned for the weekend and said that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (ESIA) had held a cleanup event the prior weekend. He invited members of the Board to join the STE.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

**14. Request for future agenda items**

Board Member Jeff Griffiths suggested inviting Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action (IMACA) Housing and Planning Director Larry Emerson and Eastern Sierra (CoC) Chair Susi Bains to the next ESCOG Board meeting to discuss regional homeless issues.

Chair Stacy Corless requested a future item to discuss regional forest management and dispersed camping issues.

Board Member John Wentworth requested that newly appointed Forest Supervisor Lesley Yen be invited to the December meeting to introduce herself to the ESCOG.

**15. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m. to the next regular meeting on December 11, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.