



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

Minutes of Regular Meeting

June 11, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes

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

Members Absent: Chair Karen Schwartz, Board Member Dan Totheroh

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. in the Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes. Members of the Board attended the meeting via videoconference.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member Bob Gardner led the flag salute.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Plumas Corporation Southern Sierra Project Manager Janet Hatfield reported that the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (the Mammoth Donut Project) had been selected for a Cal Fire Directed Funding Grant Award in the amount of approximately \$5M to be used towards implementation of the first twenty-one hundred acres within the project areas that already had National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) completed.

Quantified Ventures Associate Director Laura Drescher reported that she was working with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) and the Inyo National Forest (INF) and gave an update on the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Ms. Drescher announced that the redesign of INF campgrounds were included in the GAOA budget. She said that she was working with the Innovative Finance National Forest (IFNF) Grant Program in conjunction with the GAOA on campground improvements and said that they were considering pilot projects within the region.

There was discussion between Ms. Hatfield, Ms Drescher and members of the Board.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Moved by Board Member Stacy Corless
Seconded by Board Member Bob Gardner

Approve the Consent Agenda

For (6): 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 (2): Chair Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Dan Totheroh

Carried (6 to 0)

4.1 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 9, 2021.**

5. **POLICY MATTERS**

5.1 **Receive a presentation from Derek Kirk, Regional Business Development Specialist, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.**

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz) Regional Business Development Specialist Derek Kirk gave an update on changes made within his department and the desire to assist communities across the State. Mr. Kirk outlined the information in the handouts he had provided.

Plumas Corporation Southern Sierra Project Manager Janet Hatfield asked how GoBiz integrated with the Zero Business Council and Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC) and asked to speak with Mr. Kirk offline.

There was discussion between Mr. Kirk, Ms. Hatfield and members of the Board.

5.2 Discussion and adoption of the ESCOG JPA Fiscal Year 2021/22 Budget.

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

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

Adopt the ESCOG JPA Fiscal Year 2021/22 Budget.

For (6): 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 (2): Chair Karen Schwartz, and Board Member Dan Totheroh

Carried (6 to 0)

5.3 Discussion and direction on California Congressional Redistricting.

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report and the California 2020 State Redistricting PowerPoint Presentation.

Councilmember Jim Ellis left the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

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

There was consensus from the Board to have one representative from each member agency meet with Ms. Kabala and Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla to develop written comments regarding the redistricting priorities of the ESCOG Board and for Ms. Kabala to present these comments to the Boards and Councils of each member agency. The following Board Members were appointed to assist this task: Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths, Mono County Supervisor Stacy Corless and Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember Lynda Salcido. A representative from the City of Bishop was to be determined at a later date.

5.4 Discussion and direction on California Fire Safe Council County Wildfire Coordinators Grant.

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP) Program Director Holly Alpert said that she was working with the Regional Forests and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program and spoke in support of both Inyo and Mono Counties applying for the California Fire Safety Council County Wildfire Coordinators Grant independently and for the ESCOG to house the positions. Ms. Alpert reported that the current funding for the positions was for 18 months and said that the RFFC Program was at the ready to be a partner with the ESCOG in relation to the Wildfire Coordinator positions. She said that it was possible that additional RFFC program funds would come from the State in the future through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

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

Staff was given direction to submit letters of support for both Inyo County and Mono County's applications for the California Fire Safe Council County Wildfire Coordinators Grant.

5.5 Discussion on potential regional housing funding opportunities as proposed in the draft California Budget for 2021- 2022.

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Mammoth Lakes Housing, Inc. (MLH) Executive Director Patricia Robertson announced that MLH was going through a 20th Anniversary rebranding which would include representation of the entire region they served. Ms. Robertson reported that MLH still had only two full-time employees, as in the past ten years, and said that last year they had seen an increase of over 50% in their homeowner ownership programs in addition to operating the emergency rent relief program which had created a deficit in MLH's staff capacity. She reported that she would like to see their staff capacity grow and would like to utilize funding described in the GoBiz presentation to do so. Ms. Robertson said that she would like to expand MLH's contracts with the jurisdictions they currently served to include Mammoth Lakes, Bishop and Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties, and to bring on additional staff.

She said that she agreed with a comment made earlier in the meeting by Board Member Jeff Griffiths stating that it would be a good idea to form a regional housing summit. She gave an update on the 238 Sierra Manor Road eleven unit project in Mammoth that MLH was working on and reported that there was a funding gap of approximately \$1M. She said MLH would release an aggressive campaign to raise those funds.

Vice Chair John Wentworth said that he would work with Ms. Kabala and Mr. Griffiths regarding developing a housing summit and would bring information back to the Board at the August meeting

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

5.6 Receive an update on the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative / Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership.

Administrative Services Contractor Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

Vice Chair John Wentworth reported that the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ESCOG and the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) was in process and said that he hoped to bring an outline of the redrafted MOU to the August meeting.

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

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Jeff Griffiths announced that Inyo County was in the process of moving into the new Inyo County Consolidated Office Building and said that several community events had started back up including Mule Days, Concert in the Rocks, the Rodeo, and Community Arts Days with live music. He said Inyo County had entered a contract for a Sprung Structure for Bishop Airport's temporary terminal. He discussed redistricting within the County and said the Inyo County Board of Supervisors Redistricting Commission was waiting to see the numbers before making any changes. He reported that Inyo County had agreed upon a three year contract with its Employee Association, said the County had signed up with RCRC to facilitate the Broadband Planning Grant, and reported that they were continuing work on a small business development center in Bishop which would be a regional center for Mono and Inyo Counties.

Mr. Griffiths said that the County had been awarded a Proposition 64 Grant for approximately \$600k which would be used for at-risk youth programming and discussed plans to expand a mentoring program. He reported that there had been a rash of large illegal marijuana growing operations in the County. Mr. Griffiths said that South Lake Road had been redone last year and reported that part of the road had started to fall away after the snow melted this year and warned the other members of the Board that once a road had been built utilizing a Federal Highway Association (FHWA) Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant, there was no warranty.

City of Bishop City Administrator Ron Phillips reported that the last few days of the High School Rodeo State Finals were in process and that there were a lot of people in town for the event. Mr. Phillips said the event was going well and that it was good to see people out having a good time again.

Board Member Stacy Corless reported that she had been appointed to serve on the Executive Committee of the State's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force this year as the RCRC representative and said that she had attended a relaunch meeting on May 20th. Ms. Corless reported that the Task Force was working on early action funding and spoke about this year's dangerous wildfire outlook. She encouraged the members of the Board to participate in the Task Force meetings. She reported that Mono County should approve their Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget on Tuesday.

Board Member Bob Gardner reported that infrastructure was being deployed with CalTrans for dispersed camping and said that the Camp Like A Pro campaign had been rolled out. Mr. Gardner thanked Board Member Jeff Griffiths for Inyo County's contribution to the outreach program. He said that Grant Lake in June Lake had a rough Memorial Day Weekend with ten illegal fires Sunday night, and reported that there was small lightning fire in the Walker area and a fire at the Lee Vining Motel recently. He said that the Mono County Board of Supervisors was struggling with the transition back to in-person meetings and hoped that the four member agencies could get on the same page with the transition so it would be consistent across the region.

Board Member Lynda Salcido reported that the Town Council would approve the TOML final budget on the 16th, which would include creation of the Town's new Office of Outdoor Recreation. She said she attended a meeting this morning regarding COVID restrictions and the confusion between the State and Cal OSHA and how to help businesses navigate through the requirements.

She reported that The Parcel was moving ahead with permitting to allow the beginning of tree removal and some of the infrastructure, said that the Town Council had finalized the Strategies and Priorities Statement, and said that Town staff did a good job presenting the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Town Council at the last meeting. Ms. Salcido reported that the Town Council had approved the extension of outdoor dining and that the 4th of July Parade, fireworks and Concert in the Park were all on this year.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler announced that most events and programs were up and running again with modifications including the Mammoth Motocross event next weekend. Mr. Holler discussed changes in State COVID regulations, items of interest in the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget including housing, recreation, roadwork, design work on Multi-Use Paths (MUPs), continued Trails work, a large paving project at the airport and moving forward with the Mammoth Lakes Foundation (MLF) Mammoth Arts and Cultural Center (MACC). He spoke about the Town's partnership with the Forest Service for restroom cleaning and trash removal in the Lakes Basin and a few other areas. He said that staff was looking at options for an outdoor events venue, and discussed a partnership with Mono County for a regional upgrade to the radio communications systems and dispatch services. Mr. Holler said that he was looking forward to a very busy summer with expanded Trail Host and Community Host programs and increased enforcement activity.

Vice Chair John Wentworth said the TOML Town Council had received a presentation from Town staff regarding regional air service and that he looked forward to seeing where air service was headed moving forward.

Board Member Stacy Corless left the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice Chair John Wentworth requested that the following items be added to the August agenda; Air Service update, State Budget opportunities such as the Regional Early Access Plan (REAP) Grant funding and capacity, update on the Sustainable Recreation Tourism Initiative (SRTI) process, update on a Regional Housing Summit, and State Redistricting opportunities.

Board Member Bob Gardner requested that an item providing an update on the California Fire Safe Council Wildfire Coordinator positions be added to the August agenda.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m. to the next regular meeting schedule to be held on August 13, 2021.



Angela Plarsted, Assistant Clerk