



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

Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 10, 2021, 8:30 a.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

Chair Karen Schwartz called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.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

Chair Karen Schwartz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Board Member Lynda Salcido said that she would need to temporarily leave the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

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

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 October 8, 2021**
- 4.2 **Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 5, 2021**
- 4.3 **Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of December 3, 2021**
- 4.4 **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 from the Inyo County County Administrator's Office regarding preparation of a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala explained what a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was and spoke about the possibility of creating a regional CEDS. Ms. Kabala introduced County of Inyo Assistant County Administrator Meaghan McCamman.

Ms. McCamman spoke about potential funding for a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and asked the Board for their thoughts with regard to moving forward with a CEDS.

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Manager Dan Holler spoke in favor of a regional CEDS and discussed funding and matching requirements, in addition to leadership and staffing requirements. Mr. Holler reported that there would be a CEDS presentation next week at the TOML Town Council meeting and said that the idea had been presented at the TOML Planning and Economic Development Commission meeting earlier this week.

County of Inyo County Administrative Officer Leslie Chapman said that the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) had been working on funding for regional CEDS in areas that did not currently have one in place. Ms. Chapman asked the Board if they supported the idea of a regional CEDS and if they were willing to go back to their member agencies to request approval for them to assist with the matching funds so they could move forward.

Legal Counsel Grace Chuchla spoke about the legal impact to the ESCOG and gave input regarding the procedures for each of the member agencies.

RCRC Deputy Chief Economic Development Officer Bob Burris spoke in favor of a regional CEDS and said that the RCRC had launched an effort to provide resources to create CEDS. Mr. Burris said that the RCRC had applied for a U.S Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to support member counties with rural broadband and to ensure their member counties had CEDS. He said Inyo County had agreed to apply for an EDA grant and that he had not realized at the time that Mono County did not have a CEDS, however, he was told by the EDA that it would be possible to amend the Inyo application to add Mono and Alpine Counties if they were interested. Mr. Burris said that a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) would be available to start a project that could be reimbursed at a later date and said that consultants were available to assist with research to complete the CEDS.

City of Bishop City Administrator Ron Phillips reported that Bishop was considering applying for an EDA grant and said the Regional EDA Representative had recently approved their Economic Development General Plan as their CEDS for one year, which would allow them to apply within the next year, however, they would need the regional CEDS to apply in the future.

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

Board Member Lynda Salcido left the meeting at 8:59 a.m.

5.2 Consideration of an Agreement with the Rural County Representatives of California Revolving Loan Fund in the Amount of \$500,000

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

Rural County Representatives of California Deputy Chief Economic Development Officer Bob Burris provided additional details about the RCRC's Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA) Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program.

Mono County Director of Finance Janet Dutcher spoke about the financial structure of the program, discussed how the ESCOG's account was currently set up, and discussed options to keep the account from going negative while waiting for reimbursement to come in from the RLF.

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

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths
Seconded by Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA) and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) regarding an Advancement of Funds for Public Purposes.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (7 to 0)

5.3 Consideration of a Collection Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the United States Department of Agriculture U.S. Forest Service Inyo National Forest

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 Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve the Collection Agreement between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service Inyo National Forest.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (7 to 0)

5.4 Consideration and Direction Regarding Proposal(s) received in response to the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator Project Management Request for Proposals

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 Jeff Griffiths
Seconded by Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve execution of a Professional Services Agreement with the Whitebark Institute as presented.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (7 to 0)

5.5 Discussion and direction to submit a Notice of Interest for the California Hazard Mitigation Program Funding Opportunity

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

Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP) Project Development Specialist Rick Kattelmann spoke about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) California Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the importance of the grant to our region.

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

Moved by Board Member Stacy Corless
Seconded by Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve submission of Notice of Interest for the California Hazard Mitigation Program Funding Opportunity.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (7 to 0)

5.6 Discussion and approval of 2022 ESCOG JPA Meeting Schedule

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

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

Board Member Bob Gardner left the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

Moved by Board Member Bob Gardner

Seconded by Vice Chair John Wentworth

Approve the 2022 Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) JPA Meeting Schedule as amended to move the February meeting date and time to Friday, February 4, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Lynda Salcido

Carried (7 to 0)

5.7 Receive an Update on the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative (SRTI)

Vice Chair John Wentworth outlined the information in the Sustainable Recreation Tourism Initiative (SRTI) PowerPoint presentation.

Board Member Lynda Salcido returned at 9:45 a.m.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Jeff Griffiths gave an update regarding redistricting in Inyo County and announced that County of Inyo County Counsel Marshall Rudolph had retired and Assistant County Counsel John Vallejo had been appointed as his replacement.

Mr. Griffiths reported that Inyo County would have their first presentation on the American Rescue Plan dollars on December 14th and announced that the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (a.k.a. Bishop Airport) would welcome its first commercial flight on December 19th. He also announced that Sheriff Jeff Hollowell would retire in mid-December and that the new County office building had been formally named the Clint G. Quilter Consolidated Office Building in honor of Inyo County's late County Administrator. Mr. Griffiths reported that he attended the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) conference where he learned about the Venado Declaration which former Governor of California Jerry Brown had accelerated in an effort to protect forestlands, and said that he had been elected to the CSAC Executive Board.

Board Member Dan Totheroh announced that the Owens Valley Groundwater Association had met yesterday and approved a Groundwater Sustainability Plan which they would send to the State.

Vice Chair John Wentworth spoke about the recent, and upcoming snow in Mammoth, reported that the Town Council would meet on December 15th, and said that housing in Mammoth was moving forward.

Board Member Lynda Salcido gave an update on housing and the Community Recreation Center (CRC) and said that Mammoth was expecting more snow. Ms. Salcido said there were some big events coming up and reminded everyone to get their booster.

Board Member Stacy Corless gave an update on redistricting in Mono County, and said that there would be a decision made at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday. Ms. Corless said that the County was going through a Strategic Planning effort and hoped to complete it by early 2022. She said that she and Board Member Gardner were considering putting together a Wildfire Resilience Summit in the spring and said that she and Board Member John Wentworth had attended a tour of the Caldera Fire footprint. She said that Mono County currently had the worst COVID numbers in the state, however, the health outcomes were still good.

Board Member Jim Ellis said it was good to see the Sustainable Recreation Tourism Initiative (SRTI) come together to benefit the region. Mr. Ellis reported that the Bishop Downtown Specific Plan Review would end on Monday, said that there was an airport coming just outside of Bishop, and said that the Christmas parade last weekend was a success. He said that he was looking forward to a visit with his daughter tomorrow for the first time in a year and meeting his new granddaughter.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice Chair John Wentworth requested that the following items be addressed at a future meeting: Eastern Sierra Visitor Connection Package and the capacity of the ESCOG.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There was discussion among members of the Board and Executive Director Elaine Kabala regarding the timeline of the CEDS process.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m. to a special meeting scheduled to be held on January 7, 2022.



Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk