



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

Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 12, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Meeting held in the Bishop Council Chambers and the Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers

Bishop Council Chambers 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers 437 Old Mammoth Rd., Ste Z Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

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 Lynda Salcido

Members Absent: Board Member Jim Ellis

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair John Wentworth called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chamber, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

City of Bishop City Administrative Officer Deston Dishion led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Former City of La Quinta Planning Commission Chair and current Coachella Valley Energy Commissioner, Phillip Bettencourt, said that he was an August resident of Mammoth Lakes and was anxious to see government virtually and personally and to learn more about our region.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

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

Approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Jim Ellis

Carried (7 to 0)

- 4.1 **Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 10, 2022**
- 4.2 **Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 8, 2022**
- 4.3 **Approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 5, 2022**
- 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 – AB 361**

5. **POLICY MATTERS**

5.1 **Discussion Regarding ESCOG Staff and Funding Capacity**

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

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

Town of Mammoth Lakes Town Manager Dan Holler discussed the benefits and cost savings of structuring current and future ESCOG staff as employees through one of the member agencies rather than continuing on as contract employees or establishing its own human resources department.

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

Staff was given direction to return to the Board at the regular October meeting, or sooner if necessary at a special meeting, with a proposal for full-time staffing of an Executive Director and a part-time Administrative Assistant and to make the Board aware of any complications that would make the ESCOG unable to have full-time staff and support by October, and to rely on the support of the Town and City Managers of the four member agencies to facilitate the process.

5.2 Approval of Bid for Implementation of the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative Phase 1: Toilet Facilities Replacement

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

SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR:

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler spoke about the process and issues with similar projects in Mammoth and stressed the importance of this not becoming a public works project for the ESCOG due to additional requirements that would be placed upon them.

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

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Seconded by Board Member Lynda Salcido

Award the bid for the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative Phase 1 – Toilet Infrastructure to LBFoster CXT Products for an amount not to exceed \$77,330.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Jim Ellis

Carried (7 to 0)

5.3 Approval of Request for Proposals for Towns to Trails Plan

Chair John Wentworth recused himself from this item due to his position as President of Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA) Foundation Board.

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 Jeff Griffiths

Approve Request for Proposals for Trails Planning Services for the Eastern Sierra Towns to Trails Plan and direct staff to notice the Request for Proposals accordingly.

For (6): Vice Chair Dan Tothoroh, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Stacy Corless, Board Member Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, and Board Member Lynda Salcido

Abstain (1): Chair John Wentworth

Absent (1): Board Member Jim Ellis

Carried (6 to 0)

5.4 Consideration to Adopt a Resolution of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to Establish a Program of Work to be Known as the “ESCOG: Economic Resiliency Pilot Program”

Chair Wentworth returned to the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report and in the Community Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF) Pilot Program Resolution PowerPoint presentation.

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

Chair John Wentworth requested that the title of the resolution be changed to the ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program.

Moved by Board Member Stacy Corless

Seconded by Vice Chair Dan Tothoroh

Adopt a Resolution of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to establish a program of work to be known as the “ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program” and to seek approval from member agencies for this work as amended.

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

Absent (1): Board Member Jim Ellis

Carried (7 to 0)

5.5 Executive Director update report on Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program

Executive Director Elaine Kabala gave an update on the Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program. Ms. Kabala discussed the progress of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project, reported that she had attended a Whitebark field visit to the donut project in the Mammoth area, spoke with representatives from Blue Forest about a new venture capital program they were working on and met with representatives from Sunstone Investments regarding project opportunities in the region. Ms. Kabala reported that she looked into the California Strategic Growth Council Regional Climate Collaborative which was discussed at the last ESCOG meeting and had determined that the ESCOG did not have the capacity to pursue that at this time. She said that after discussions with counsel and other regional managers it would not be beneficial to create an ad hoc committee to work on future grant opportunities as recommended at a prior meeting.

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

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Stacy Corless announced that the Mono County Board of Supervisors had approved creation of a new Office of Emergency Management and had appointed former Mono County Chief of Emergency Medical Services Chris Mokracek as the Director. Ms. Corless reported that the State Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force had an in person meeting scheduled to be held on September 27th and 28th in Grass Valley. She said that Chair John Wentworth would present on a recreation related plan for the Task Force and said more information was available at <https://wildfiretaskforce.org>.

Board Member Bob Gardner reported that the Mono County Children's Summit on July 13th was a success and said that the next Citizens Wildfire Academy was scheduled to be held on Monday, August 15th at 6:00 p.m. and the topic would be home hardening and defensible space.

Vice Chair Dan Totheroh reported that Inyo County was in the process of filling their soon to be vacant Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) position upon Leslie Chapman's retirement, and said that there had been a lot of flooding in the south portion of the County due to the recent heavy rainfall.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that the recent floods had stranded over one thousand people in Death Valley and hundreds of campers in the Sierra due

to road access being cut off and said that the County helped with getting people out and sheltering them. Mr. Griffiths said that there would be an item on the ballot at the next election which would propose extending Inyo County's Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) to include campgrounds and RV Parks, and announced that a new company, Skydive Mt. Whitney, had recently opened and offered sky diving trips in Lone Pine.

Chair John Wentworth announced that he would run again for the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) Town Council in November. Chair Wentworth said that he had recently taken a tour of the Parcel site and said that he hoped public tours would be available in the fall and that staff was working on that. He said reported TOML TOT numbers were still strong.

Board Member Karen Schwartz reported that the City of Bishop had repurposed the Sterling Heights Assisted Living into studio apartments which would add sixty-nine units to their housing stock, and said that the City was pursuing business to comply with their new signage ordinance.

Board Member Lynda Salcido said that Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD) Chief Frank Frievalt's retirement party was held last night and that MLFPD Division Chief Ales Tomaier had been named as his successor.

Chair Wentworth reported that he and Executive Director Elaine Kabala had discussed providing a report out to members of the Board after their meetings to use as a tool to easily communicate ESCOG business and action with their member agencies.

TOML Town Manager Dan Holler spoke about the evacuation drill that took place in the Trails neighborhood in Mammoth on August 11th and the recent active shooter training at Mammoth Elementary School, both of which were collaborative efforts with multiple first responder agencies in the region.

City of Bishop City Administrator Deston Dishion reported that he and Ms. Kabala put together a housing meeting on August 5th with representatives from the City of Bishop, Inyo County, the Tribe, Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Mr. Dishion reported that the Forest Service currently had seventy-five positions open that they could not fill due to housing issues. He said that the first ad hoc committee meeting to discuss a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) for Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would take place next week and said that Nora Gamino had been appointed as the new Public Works Director.

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

7. **REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m. to a special meeting scheduled to be held on September 9, 2022.



Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk