

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

April 10, 2017
(Adopted May 8, 2017)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Larry Johnston, John Peters, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Dan Holler for Sandy Hogan, Shields Richardson, John Wentworth

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Janet Dutcher, Gerry Le Francois, Michael Draper, Wendy Sugimura. CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton

CALTRANS: Brent Green, Ryan Dermody

ESTA: Jill Batchelder, John Helm

SSTAC: Rick Franz, Jill Batchelder, John Helm

GUESTS: Ralph Obenberger, Wayne Beaver, Dave & Linda Dore

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair John Peters called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, Attendees recited pledge of allegiance to the flag.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: No items.

3. MINUTES

MOTION: Approve minutes of March 13, 2017, as amended: Item 6B after motion: **Commissioner Johnston indicated his concerns with the sidewalk project which would be undesirable for pedestrians, unsafe, and subject to severe snow removal operations if the sidewalk were located immediately adjacent to Main Street.** (Stump/Richardson. Ayes: 6-0. Abstain due to absence: Holler.)

4. PUBLIC HEARING: Unmet Transit Needs.

Scott Burns noted SSTAC members had not been fully apprised, so suggested continuing hearing to May 8.

Wendy Sugimura cited PUC (Public Utilities Commission) code to provide annual hearing and formal unmet transit needs hearing process. LTC has **never allocated funds not dedicated this funding** to streets and roads in **recent years**. Important for public input and keeping options open for main budget allocation. SSTAC is directly connected to those who need services. File with State in June.

Today's attendees come back? No, but nice to hear conversations.

Sugimura introduced Rick Franz, and John Helm and Jill Batchelder from ESTA, which coordinates Inyo and Mono counties.

Michael Draper noted elderly, disabled, low-income transit not available. Defined categories. Staff attended RPACs: Antelope Valley, Bridgeport Valley, June Lake CAC, Mono Basin, Chalfant/Benton/ Hammil, and Long Valley/Paradise/Swall Meadows). Few needs were indicated.

OPEN HEARING: No comments. **CONTINUE to May 8.**

5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: **Stump:** None. **Johnston:** State transportation bill SB 1. Commended CSAC (California State Association of Counties) effort contacting legislators up to last minute. Means additional money, forwarding projects on hold. **Stump:** Needed to be done, but no reason for self-congratulations, when diverted, borrowed, and not paid back money. Pushed to limit, not enthusiastic support. Politicians for years could not deal with issues. Impact on lower-income, California has highest gas tax in nation (Johnston corrected

COMMISSIONERS

Sandy Hogan Larry Johnston John Peters, chair Shields Richardson Fred Stump John Wentworth, vice-chair

to second highest). **Wentworth**: Thanks for engagement on Reds Meadow Road project. Also Walk/Bike/Ride. Varied agencies involved. Potential for significant changes along Main Street, report at next meeting. **Peters**: BOS item for SR (State Route) 120. Nevada meeting on Walker "River Irrigation District shed light on snowpack in mountains – 213% of normal water content, Leavitt Lake at record level. Challenging because each new snowfall slows melting process.

6. ADMINISTRATION

A. **LTC financial audit**: Janet Dutcher sequentially reviewed audit report, citing some notables: 1) independent auditor's report is best can get; 2) resources for future years up \$69,000 due to 2013-14 error. 3) Grant-driven agency reimbursed by revenues; 4) total revenues = \$648,000, expenses = \$580,000, so carry-over funds; and 5) PTMISEA (Public Transportation Modernization Improvement & Service Enhancement Account) held for ESTA improvements at transit facility.

No non-compliance. Good to go for another year. The LTC accepted financial audit by consensus.

B. **Overall Work Program**: Gerry Le Francois still has draft OWP for 2017-18. OWP was in packet February and March, not included this time. Wentworth noted *Walk/Bike/Ride was included*.

C. **CTC meeting in September**: Gerry Le Francois noted staff's desire for most of LTC to attend. Safest approach is to agendize any potential participation as a Special Meeting.

Issue for LTC? *Open special meeting*. Agenda components? Issues successfully completed. CTC's regular meeting. Wentworth suggested sustainable recreation in gateway communities, engagement with other partners.

How does State look at rural communities? Le Francois indicated economic advantages/disadvantages, lack of private land. Maybe have 5-10 minutes.

Dermody noted staff sets agenda, not full commission. Involve Kern. Working on agenda with Le Francois. Get group together. Wentworth suggested being good hosts with good show. Dermody wanted to make it memorable.

Johnston mentioned rest area open year round. Funding not work without sales tax generation, other groups push forward projects. Rurals do not get as much money. Wentworth wanted to know what financing looks like for rural areas.

Green indicated Caltrans would not do that much at CTC meeting. Huge opportunity to host CTC and hear challenges from LTC, not Caltrans. Let CTC know challenges. Maybe town hall for CTC, staff and elected officials telling what they do. Set strategy meeting to formulate agenda.

7. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Reds Meadow Road FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program)**: Grady Dutton noted May 12 FLAP application deadline. ESTA added \$1 fee to shuttle trip. Create fund for future maintenance, \$100,000/yr. Met March 20 with USFS and FHWA (Federal Highway Administration). Town resolution adopted April 5. No request to authorize FLAP letter in support of Reds Meadow project, bring back May 8. Match = 11.4%. NPS possibly provide part of match, not yet confirmed. Applications more successful with over-match. Town resolution noted regional resource's deteriorating condition. Town likely unable to help open Hwy. 120 due to Lakes Basin, Reds Meadow. Digital 395 has federal dollars, possibly include conduit in project. Will seek federal funds to assist. USFS and NPS budgets cut, so likely unable to help. Quality of visitor experience is high priority.

Support letter from LTC and BOS? Yes. Would show regional cooperation, everyone on board. Madera gets revenue, so maybe support letter or even \$1,000 or \$5,000.

ESTA contribution possible for USFS and NPS (National Park Service)? Dutton indicated limited ability to charge entry fees at USFS. Holler cited maintaining "our" road, so not collect fees from USFS or NPS.

Taking over their responsibility, maybe contribute a little bit? Wentworth stated USFS is providing NEPA and design work, so not talk about entrance fees.

Sell maps at interpretive center? Dutton indicated plenty of time to find other ways to enhance funding.

Wentworth noted resolution can be tweaked. Walk/Bike/Ride reach out to MMSA to provide transit hub. LAFCO opportunity to move county lines? Scott Burns stated not LAFCO issue.

Reds or Red's for consistency? CD Ritter recalled that Sandy Hogan, formerly USFS, indicated no punctuation in Reds Meadow or Devils Postpile. Verify with USFS.

Move county lines? Burns would continue outreach with Madera, verify process with County Counsel.

Stump recalled Mono and Town put lots of effort into land exchange. Dutton indicated MMSA started to participate in Walk/Bike/Ride. Wentworth suggested discussing county lines with Congressman Paul Cook.

Le Francois noted desire to over-match. New STIP now. Typically get new funding. LTC preserved Freeman Gulch segment one, Olancha/Cartago is outstanding; hopefully Kern will pay back money to Freeman Gulch for Olancha/Cartago. Reserve of \$11 million was loaned out to others. STIP needs to be revenue neutral. Johnston thought over-match good idea, but not if it cuts out Olancha/Cartago project. LTC still has Conway Summit project. Dermody confirmed North Conway two-lane to four lane, and passing lanes in Bridgeport Valley.

Le Francois noted High Point correction at Topaz became safety element, so cost much less. Mono is considered in southern part of California.

Le Francois indicated Inyo is working on Mosquito Flat [in Rock Creek Canyon]. Mono may have agreement with Inyo on upper-section maintenance. Lower section used toll credits. Johnston discussed cycling on upper section with Inyo's Courtney Smith. Much narrower, so turnouts.

MOTION: Approve application & consider future Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) amendment for match purposes. (Ayes: 5-0.)

B. Upper Rock Creek FLAP grant:

MOTION: Authorize chair's signature on letter of support for upper 1.3 miles of Rock Creek Road (Johnston/Wentworth. Ayes: 5-0.)

8. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): John Helm presented preliminary results. Ridership up system wide. Mammoth Express up 66% over last year due to snow shovelers. During significant January/February weather Town kept roads open, but transit was impacted. What ESTA predicted happened: Gray Line ceased, Town trolley filled in some, ridership went to Red Line. MMSA up 15%, Trolley up 6%. Couldn't operate nights. Old Mammoth limited route set up. Better service up Meridian corridor, be more efficient. Productivity increased 14%.

ESTA anticipates transition plan for consistent service to community in effect April 24: Red Line to discontinue, Town trolley day and night. Connector shuttle at Village.

New service in Bishop: Recreation route to lakes mid-June to mid-August. Positive feedback about new service. Buses have two bike racks.

ESTA continues workshops with Mammoth Lakes Housing. Struggling with recruiting and housing.

Wentworth suggested Helm present to Town Council follow-up on Gray Line closure. Looking at how to distribute Mammoth folks. Johnston noted Gray Line serviced workforce housing.

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Michael Draper noted recommendation for JPA budget, up 3.6% due to admin and replacement costs. Merced agreement for five-year renewal. Summer schedule unchanged. Online reservations available now. Opening Memorial Day weekend. Social media push: 5,256 visitors/week.

ESTA discussed transfer site with YARTS, no more McDonalds. Bus shelter by park and ride.

Draper cited \$3,000 damage at Lee Vining stop.

--- Break: 10:35-10:40 ---

9. CALTRANS

A. District 9 2017 construction: Ryan Dermody described Mono projects scheduled for short construction season: Walker Cap M (major maintenance); Green Lakes Cap M started last summer; biggest Sheep Ranch shoulder project north of Buckeye Road north of Bridgeport; and environmental permits from CDFW (California Department of Fish & Wildlife) and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board where lots of wildlife live. Three-year project. Turn pockets slated. Biggest project in district is SR 14 Freeman Gulch segment one (five miles), Lake Isabella excluded. Likely two seasons. Green noted groundbreaking in Kern, but funding by Mono and Inyo.

North County projects simultaneous? Yes. Potential delays 20 minutes times three? Mostly seven-minute delays. Start dates hard to tell. Truck turn-around project at SR 108 likely in two years. Fix for rumble strip? No, maybe thin blanket treatment. Inventory of winter damage? Still doing assessments.

B. Average Annual Daily Traffic Count 1992-2016: Ryan Dermody noted traffic increases. Why increase? *Everything went up. Beware talking of trucks in our area, as other areas have tens of thousands per day.*
Project at 395/58? *Kramer Junction. SR 58 third or fourth highest goods movement corridor. Update construction map.*

C. Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information: Brent Green noted passage of SB 1: Road Repair & Accountability Act. Fix it first, not expand. A 20-cent diesel excise tax is devoted to beneficiaries such as shipping industries. Payback from general fund loans. ATP (Active Transportation Program), bridges, culverts, local planning grants. STIP projects got very little money out of SB 1 (Freeman Gulch, Olancho/Cartago). Almost all Eastern Sierra safety and shoulder widenings projects are SHOPP (State Highway Operation & Protection Program). Change of money flow affects us almost immediately. Funds based on performance condition. Redo performance targets, contract out projects. Lots of unknowns. Topaz project was SHOPP, maybe North Conway as well? Dermody stated could be.

Penalized if poor to fair to good? Policy implications in SB 1? Green stated could ask for up to six different elements, but can't switch money between. Can lose time awaiting approval.

Does SB 1 help with snow removal? Green noted statewide damage funds exceed \$860 million, very little for this area. Extra snow is not actual damage like bridge collapse. Not open passes simultaneously. SR 120 not just snow removal, but rockfall, etc. Caltrans not seeking outside help. Mono has helped NPS (National Park Service). Memorial Day opening unlikely.

Wentworth suggested debrief on snow effects. Have conversation with Caltrans. Short staffed on SR 203. Green indicated everyone in state hit at same time. Manpower issues, new equipment last year did not work as well as expected. What is Caltrans doing about staffing? Green mentioned availability and process. Hiring takes three to four months. Equipment operators arrive relatively experienced, not entry level. Hire at lower level and train.

Canyon between Walker and SR 108? Dermody indicated SHOPP project taken off list. Sacramento thinks pavement's fine. Bringing back Walker Canyon project.

Prioritization matrix? Dermody indicated not yet, maybe in six months.

Green stated Monitor Pass has one lane open, Sonora snow removal equipment for 5'-12' snow, may start; Bodie Road open, but State Parks said close it; SR 120E fully ready before weekend storm; June Lake Loop cleared, reassess after weekend storm, maybe open this week; Reds Meadow Road? No idea; 168W to lakes not yet; Crestview rest area open; SR 120W damage assessment, drifts up to 50', snowpack up to 15', last pass to open. Still getting snow, which sets back clock. Problematic area first couple miles. Wentworth noted no help from MMSA.

SR 182 closure may continue week or two. Peters noted Mono employees, ranchers bringing horses, and law enforcement travel Bridgeport to Smith Valley. *Caltrans will issue frequent press releases.*

Start clearing Tioga Road? *Staging equipment at bottom. No set calendar date.*

Park and ride cleared by Caltrans for commuters? *State looking to remove park and ride from inventories. Federal restrictions on signage, etc. Constant battle with feds.*

10. INFORMATIONAL

A. State transportation funding legislation

11. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS: 1) OWP amendment; 2) unmet transit needs; 3) LTF funding; 4) Walk/Bike/Ride; 5) CTC strategy session; 6) Reds Meadow FLAP; 7) quarterly reports; 8) pass opening update.

12. ADJOURN at 11:35 a.m. to May 8, 2017

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary