

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

February 13, 2017
(Adopted March 13, 2017)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Larry Johnston, John Peters, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Sandy Hogan, Shields Richardson, John Wentworth

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Jeff Walters (via video), Garrett Higerd, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton

CALTRANS: Brent Green, Ryan Dermody, Mark Heckman

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Shields Richardson called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, Attendees recited pledge of allegiance to the flag.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. MINUTES

MOTION: Approve minutes of Oct. 3, 2016, as amended: 1) Item 7A, graph 4: ~~only one overcrossing undercrossings~~; and 2) Item 7B, second line: ~~Open-Free~~-range area attracts cattle, chickens. (Stump/Hogan. Ayes: 4. Abstain: Richardson, Peters.)

MOTION: Approve minutes of Nov. 14, 2016. (Johnston/Wentworth. Ayes: 4. Abstain: Hogan, Peters.)

MOTION: Approve minutes of Dec. 12, 2016. (Johnston/Wentworth. Ayes: 4. Abstain: Stump, Peters.)

4. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER: John Peters of Bridgeport was introduced and offered a few comments.

5. ELECTION OF CHAIR: John Peters was elected Chair and John Wentworth Vice-Chair.

6. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: **Stump:** Acknowledged all road crews for admirable effort, citing issues such as gigantic boulder on Lower Rock Creek Road and avalanche. Sometimes nature overwhelms human capacity: isolation, stranded, power outage from avalanche. **Wentworth:** Echoed comments. Aggressive winter, trucking snow out of town. Ormat industrial blower at well by Shady Rest dug road, took out multi-use trails. Road has consistent 5' berm, no fencing or safety signage, people could drop right off. **Hogan:** None, just back from Tahoe. **Peters:** Echoed comments on road crews, spending extra hours, sleeping in offices, etc. People asked for things, but no atmosphere of discontent. Focus was finding solutions. **Richardson:** Keep communication lines open to determine problems. Strike force to huddle for solutions. Keep machines going. **Johnston:** Reiterated road comments. Avy site at Crowley, nobody hurt. Gather afterward to coordinate info. Send LTC thank-you letter to crews. Clearing pedestrian pathway along 203: no agreement, but somehow cleared. Folks at Trails have dug out drainage easement belonging to Town, homes garages flooded. Snow thrown back into drainage. Legal action possible. MUSD parking lot flooded. List commissioners on agenda.

Stump saw more avalanches at McGee, still potential. Avy watch along Sierra. Roads reopened Saturday. Wentworth noted Town declared state of emergency. Sue Burak focuses on avy threat to roads, development. Jeff Walters takes her info, makes decisions to protect people, notifies fire departments. Peters wanted to create clearinghouse resources to centralize database. Wentworth saw Town coordinating. Peters mentioned

getting enough info on providing safety for crews. Johnston noted Mono also declared emergency. Stump thought more damage would be discovered after melt.

7. ADMINISTRATION

A. **Conflict of Interest review:** Christy Milovich noted Stephen Kerins is no longer at county counsel. Electronic filing of Form 700? *Contracts to review, on to State. Covers multiple commissions.*

MOTION: Authorize updated LTC conflict-of-interest code. (Stump/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.)

B. **Initial OWP (Overall Work Program):** Gerry Le Francois introduced initial draft of 2017-18 OWP. No budget yet. Get \$230,000 RPA (Rural Planning Assistance), \$135,000 from CTC (California Transportation Commission) for PPM (Planning, Programming & Monitoring). Pre-construction funding for planning, monitoring, project study reports. RTP (Rural Transportation Plan) adopted December 2015, coordinate with HCD, update in December 2017. Four-year RTP adoption cycle, eight-year housing. Work Element 601: Corridor Management Plan due in 2017.

Funding? *Similar budget to meet required match. RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program) adoption December 2017. Incorporate ESTA short-range by reference, YARTS starting also.*

Incorporate incidents this winter into OWP and Town's walk/bike/ride program into RTP.

Le Francois stated RTP update for December 2017 will replace drafts from Town. Emergency coordination element?

Maybe not due diligence till May or June? Le Francois noted can amend, return for LTC approval.

Burns suggested expanding update of hazard mitigation plan. Wentworth thought emergency declaration defined incidents. Build library of info. May not know implications till June or July.

Timeline identifiers? Dutton suggested identifying incidents, not every bit of damage.

Stump suggested splitting 16.15.0 into two components: evacuation routes and new information.

Peters wanted to look at fire road access damages. Resources out there?

Burns: Complementary efforts, overlap on issues like avalanches. Get transportation policies.

Johnston suggested staff look into amended vs. new work element.

Wentworth noted Town is doing photo documentation.

Johnston: Talking communication aspects. Was it effective? How to do it better?

Specific work elements next meeting? *Take Johnston's direction, revise draft to submit to Caltrans. Placeholder for winter emergency information.*

How coordinate air quality with Great Basin? *Town item.* Hogan noted monitoring started back in 1990s, feeds into Great Basin.

How coordinated? *Hayes is working on it.*

C. **RPA (Rural Planning Assistance) 2015-16:** Gerry Le Francois noted funds are spent every year, can roll over certain amount not spent. \$17,000 carryover from 2015-16. Roll into Work Elements 100, 800, 900.

Unrestricted? *Directed to three areas.*

Hogan noted staff's best estimate of where spending time.

Roll-over funds for new element? *Another potential roll-over August to September.*

Dutton indicated he'd be happy to work with LTC staff, make recommendations.

MOTION: Approve adding unexpended funds to 2016-17 Overall Work Program. (Richardson/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.)

8. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Reds Meadow Road:** Grady Dutton wanted to see road when snow's gone, assess runoff impact. Deadline extended by five weeks. USFS (US Forest Service) / FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) cost estimate reduced. \$23.5 million for project, most critical top 2.5 miles = \$16.5 million.

Two grant cycles? Looking at all options with agencies. Uphill bike lane included in cost. Town staff recommends to Town Council, as Town is on hook for long-term maintenance. Upper part would have 1.5 to two lanes. Could scale back. Town Council assesses risk factors.

Wentworth wanted to engage regional offices of NPS (National Park Service), USFS as Hogan suggested. Town talked to Rep. Paul Cook on interaction of partners. Identified goals in DEPO (Devils Postpile) management plan. Will incorporate broad-band sleeves. NPS concerned about too many people. Flow managed through transportation system, not function of road size. Draft resolution, vet with partners, get agency concerns. Talk of sustainable recreation, leverage resources. Richardson thanked Wentworth for consulting in Washington, DC.

Dutton stated NPS and USFS indicated part of match. Town would do long-term maintenance. Toll credits available. Back to LTC in March or April, to ask for funding. Biggest factor is support from regional partners.

Wentworth wanted to make sure LTC is involved in conversations, at table to hear directly.

Dutton noted design by nationwide firm that's worked a lot with federal highways and done excellent job. As descend road, no cut slopes on right side, guard rails on left side. Will not see slopes and walls.

Higerd cited walls on Convict and Rock Creek roads. FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) did attractive but expensive rock work in view. LTC's providing match is not new concept; i.e., Convict project. Went over well with State and FHWA.

Le Francois recalled TE (Transportation Enhancement) funded Lake Mary Road. Regional project even though in another county. On match: Project cuts in 2016 STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program), some into hiatus. Olancho/Cartago still very expensive at \$80 million, sending money to Kern's territory, get some back. LTC has \$12 million now, but not know when O/C goes to construction. Historically had zero to \$4 million to \$5 million. Freeman Gulch segment two on SR 14 is bigger discussion if Kern COG (Council of Governments) revives project. Inyo funded segment one. LTC always has committed a lot of money to get people here, safely. Big chunk of RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program) goes to shares for Olancho/Cartago.

Dutton wanted commitment from other funding sources. Not anticipate match from Madera County, but asking for in-person presentation to show entire project, request strong letter of support.

Peters suggested taking topic to Collaborative Planning Team, which meets again April 27.

B. Crestview rest area support letter: Scott Burns stated Crestview rest area has concerned LTC for at least 10 years.

Johnston saw it as shelter for public as well as Caltrans, Mono, and sheriff. Hard closure? *Green indicated no periodic opening.* Reasonable site in terms of snowfall? *Deadman gets worst amount of snow. Bad just north of 203.*

Funding issue? *Facilities projects at bottom of barrel.*

MOTION: Approve Crestview rest area support letter as modified on first bullet point: **Provides an emergency shelter for Caltrans and emergency service personnel** on a stretch of highway prone to winter hazards. (*Johnston/Stump. Ayes: 6-0.*)

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

C. LTC letters of support for SB 1 & AB 1: Gerry Le Francois outlined funding that CTC (California Transportation Commission) would refund. Higerd recalled \$1.81 billion returned, phased in over five years.

Johnston noted CSAC (California State Association of Counties) would like a bill. Hopefully something gets done this legislative session. Green noted attention is there in special session, so confidence rose.

Johnston wondered about fatalities when projects are not implemented; e.g., not funding four-lane projects. He thought preventive maintenance helped reduce impact of heavy winter.

MOTION: Authorize LTC letters of support for Senate Bill 1 & Assembly Bill 1. (*Hogan/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.*)

9. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): John Helm presented ESTA's quarterly operations report. Farebox of 10% required system-wide. Passengers/hour: Reds route extremely efficient and successful. Funding for decreased fare on Mammoth Express boosted ridership, with increase from unexpected source: snow shovelers. Gray Line, which transported students to school, workers to work, and guests to ski area, was discontinued. ESTA modified Dial-A-Ride weekdays for few runs to Old Mammoth. No fare test yet due to weather. Plan is to run through school year, gauge usage/demand, talk to Town.

ESTA met with June Lake CAC to get commitment from community. Ridership very low. Shorten season, fewer operating days.

Publicity on new service? *Press releases, website, Twitter, bus stop signs (buried now), and emails.*

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Scott Burns reported AAC (Authority Advisory Committee) met last week, full board next week. Reviewed stats for Eastside service: up from prior year. Yosemite attracted 5 million visitors last year. \$100,000 grant, social media presence increasing. Fresno service dropped out, amended service to Bass Lake. Burns introduced Michael Draper, who is running unmet transit needs process.

10. CALTRANS

A. **TCR (Transportation Concept Report) for SR 108:** Mark Heckman summarized report that was updated from 2011. Truck restriction approved, but not signed. Truck entity to inform? Dermody noted California Trucking.

Two new projects: turnaround area west of base in next few years, and truck restriction signs on 395. Discovered 108 goes into Alpine County, not Tuolumne County. Change signage.

Environmental work on truck turnaround? Dermody noted frogs in area. Trucks will get citation. Johnston suggested writing bike facility more positively. Snow removal schedule? *None*. Heckman noted passes should open by fishing opener.

B. **Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Brent Green noted district directors statewide discuss storms/weather monthly. As of last Monday, 210 road closures, \$212 million expended (well over normal year). Director's orders are issued when contracting policy is modified; i.e., Hwy 58 mudslide. Already 100 orders issued in various counties. A lot of snow is not an emergency, but 130 miles of 395 closed due to whiteout conditions from wind gusts. Mostly positive feedback on staffing (down about 20 staff, most work 12-hr shifts). Reached out to other districts, addressing manpower. Seasonal hires. Dispatch works 24/7 with CHP (California Highway Patrol) and Mono on updates when anything changes (18 last weekend alone). Dynamic situation, lots going on behind scenes. Most challenging is keeping ski area and town open, important to economy. Maintenance crews are working hard, can't keep up with expectations and short staff. Peters pegged reopening as biggest question. Green thanked LTC for truck input.

Dermody stated environmentally sensitive area Aspen Fales is rescheduled tomorrow in Bridgeport.

Heckman indicated statewide bike/pedestrian plan comments accepted till March 10. Goal is to double bike/pedestrian usage by 2020. Maybe statewide contract for each district. Support letter from LTC? Application due mid-April. Forward info to LTC.

11. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. **Town of Mammoth Lakes:** Grady Dutton wanted to get people out of street in town. Fence at airport: USFS has issue with jog in fence. Continue larger conversation of wildlife. Permit with Caltrans. Eight-foot chain-link fence, not bare metal. Usually 10' fences required.

B. **Mono County:** Garrett Higerd cited programmed projects. Preventive maintenance and Airport Road rehab on radar as Town progresses with FAA on new terminal building. If California Legislature moves forward, proposed pushing up two projects, backfilling with combination of new projects. Coordinate FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program) with Bridgeport Valley RPAC and Humboldt-Toiyabe (no FLAP projects there). Prepare competitive project. Stock Drive realignment completed. Fast-track projects in queue first, then look at others identified.

Federal highway bridge program? Higerd had no report on it, but goal is to program bridge project in Antelope Valley, functionally obsolete. Cunningham Lane bridge is of most concern.

C. **Caltrans:** Mark Heckman reviewed Caltrans projects.

12. INFORMATIONAL

A. **Lee Vining Rockfall project:** Commissioner Stump was grateful for completion prior to heavy winter. Brent Green plans to submit project for Excellence in Planning award.

B. **RTP update schedule:** Out early fall, along with 2018 STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) / RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program).

C. **Town Council ratifies emergency proclamation:** Grady Dutton noted Gov. Jerry Brown added Mono County to emergency declaration today. Based on current storm, looking at issues in county and town, focusing on propane tanks. Not normal, so debrief. Document incidents, as nothing was documented in 1997 or 1983, all anecdotal. Writing emergency plan for town with consultant. After six weeks of this, takes everybody. Locals stepped up, cleared path by Footloose without permit to get pedestrians off highway. Few trucking companies, so trucks brought in to haul snow. Canyon and 203 of most concern. Jeff Walters stated coordinated effort with all agencies throughout Mono would be appreciated.

13. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) bike grant letter; 2) OWP; 3) annual audit; 4) appreciation letter to road crews

14. **ADJOURN** at 11:57 a.m. to March 13, 2017

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary