

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

September 11, 2017
(Adopted October 23, 2017)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: John Peters, Fred Stump. **ABSENT:** Larry Johnston

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: John Wentworth, Shields Richardson, Sandy Hogan.

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Michael Draper, Garrett Higerd, Wendy Sugimura, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton, Haislip Hayes

CALTRANS: Brent Green, Ryan Dermody, Bryan Winzenread

ESTA: Jill Batchelder

GUESTS: Courtney Smith, Inyo County Planning; Chris Lizza, Mono Market

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair John Peters called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes. A moment of silence was held in honor of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks Sept. 11, 2001. Attendees recited pledge of allegiance to the flag.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Chris Lizza spoke on Tioga Pass and workforce housing as a skier/angler/hiker advocate as well as business owner. Usually Tioga talks occur in springtime. Maybe plan better in future. Opening dates have fallen farther back. Two issues: Caltrans to gate, NPS getting people through. Caltrans communicated well this year with tours and helicopter images. Caltrans uses bulldozers and excavators, whereas MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) uses snowcats and is anxious to help. Better use of tools and personnel. Caltrans has lots of other jobs elsewhere. Recreational opportunities delayed. NPS (National Park Service) has interest in opening pass, but seems unwilling to open till facilities are operating. Lots more people coming up and over. People were recreating at Tenaya very first day open. 20' snowbanks are tourist attraction. Need to look for long-term rather than annual solutions. Task force for solutions?

Did MMSA help in past? Lizza noted NPS can't hire private contractors. Hogan recalled Town helped out. Peters participated in field trips, but County was not always there. Will address in winter debrief. NPS leadership's in flux. Need coordination to safely get things open. Thanks to Caltrans, safety factors were addressed. Stump indicated that responding to public comment is out of order. Mono has limited capacity to do much. Wentworth noted Mono's funding a recreation position.

3. MINUTES

MOTION: Continue minutes of June 12, 2017, to October meeting.

MOTION: Approve minutes of Aug. 14, 2017, as amended: 1) Item 4A, line 8: FLAP grant ~~\$.14~~ **\$24.5 mil**; and 2) item 6B, graph 2, line 2: Hogan wanted to **waive include** YARTS.
(Hogan/Richardson. Ayes: 4. Absent: Johnston. Abstain due to absence: Wentworth.)

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Stump:** No items. **Wentworth:** Weather station at Mammoth does not satisfy needs of NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration). Walk/Bike/Ride program is under way. **Hogan:** Truck signs on Sonora Pass installed in both directions. Thanks to Caltrans for traffic alerts. **Richardson:** 395/14 uphill earth moving occurring, wide roadway. **Peters:** Saw progress as well. Thanks to Dermody and crew for working through road closures, diversions, alternate routes. Slinkard fire addressed by agencies. Antelope Valley RPAC critical of contractors' demeanor (not Caltrans, but outsiders). Jeff Walters has

COMMISSIONERS

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

relocated to Idaho, Dublin is interim public works director. Green Creek bridge replacement pleases citizenry at Virginia Lakes.

5. ADMINISTRATION

A. STIP (State Transportation Improvement Plan)/RTP (Regional Transportation Plan):

Gerry Le Francois noted lots of money out of Mono to provide safe travel. 2018 cycle \$19 million, max \$23 million. Three large projects: O/C (Olancho/Cartago) and Freeman Gulch segments 2 and 3 (overview at CTC meeting). No action needed today. LTC sometimes not want to overextend. Revolving bank account, loans to other entities.

How break out MOU projects from local projects but not jeopardize existing MOUs. How much for local?

Le Francois stated Airport Road was programmed in. Local needs exist.

When over hump for MOU projects to refocus dollars on local projects?

Winzenread recalled four-lane plan started in 1955, with 250 miles of 280 miles already upgraded. Three projects remain. Accident reduction, appreciated by southlanders who travel to condo in Mammoth. Last decade not lot of money into STIP. Last cycle had zero. SB 1 changes revenue streams, flow back for projects. Inyo and Mono chipped into MOUs. ITIP (Interregional Transportation Improvement Program) contributing back 40% share for Olancho/Cartago. \$49 million for construction. Inyo put in \$21 million, so share balance = \$1.3 million. Kern putting in 10% portion. Mono at 10% contribution. \$21 million chunk out there. CTC staff willing to have Inyo/Mono go into deficits. Over-program this cycle.

Stump noted Mono's backlog of deferred maintenance. Two projects: four-lane 395 south of Bridgeport and passing lanes north of Bridgeport. At minimum wanted Mono to continue money into deferred maintenance. Every supervisorial district has roads in need of maintenance. Not want to defer again. Come up with extra million, maybe turn corner, catch up. Town projects not funded in 2016 STIP. How does it all tie together?

Burns stated no formal policy, but Mono willing to do its share on State system. Le Francois confirmed no predetermined formulas. STIP guidelines hit bulk of money. SB 1 is new creature, greater SHOPP (State Highway Operation & Protection Program) component. Past LTCs worried about going into red.

Higerd cited staff report to BOS, recommendations for funding for SB 1, STIP cycle all interrelated. Separate from LTC, \$700,000 extra revenue from SB 1, increasing to about \$3 million/year about five years hence. Not enough to get ahead, but better than we were. Roads degrading at slower rate, but enough to stabilize degradation? STIP necessary funding source for bringing roads up to acceptable standard.

Is 40% adequate for local? Comes down to prioritization. Do we want to continue 40% share to Southern California? Still comfortable with that. Traffic comes from our guests.

Winzenread indicated part of \$19 million already programmed on O/C. Now about \$8 million to Mono. What are needs in relation to getting O/C project done?

What happens when projects are completed? Winzenread understood local pavement needs, but had passion for four-lane projects. Richardson cited accidents down south, and Winzenread recalled bad accident this year

Stump stated not either/or. Accidents occur on all roads. Supported MOUs, but asked if any left for local work. Can't deficit spend without deferring local work. Gets calls from neighbors. Winzenread thought local needs could be incorporated.

Wentworth thought it's been going on for decades. New 2040 Caltrans program redefining outlook. Need to look at future context to start planning. He cited Town infrastructure issues.

Asking for >40%? Yes.

Higerd noted next STIP is in hole with 2020, but better with SB 1.

Dutton stated Town applied to reprogram \$2.6 million for roundabout to Main Street. Many moving pieces.

Peters indicated not at starting gate till pavement management system gets to BOS. How tackle backlog of known issues. \$700,000 from SB 1. Two-year gap not knowing how to move on program.

Winzenread mentioned ITIP piece, full amount of payback. Caltrans on ITIP piece Sept.15. Still draft form till December. Need projects farther along to take advantage of opportunities.

In his three years here Green noted CTC six engaged in STIP and RTIP. Politicking on what it will look like. Eyes on strength of MOU partners, what means for future. O/C in Inyo County = 40%. Still gap in construction. Mono and Inyo into negative share balance. Still have money programmed, but borrowing from future. Impact on other needs for STIP dollars. Consensus among LTC at CTC meeting. Caltrans taking to agency, trying to sell to take next step. Wants high level of confidence with CTC of commitment of all partners. One of challenging issues is payback of FG segment one.

Wentworth met with Le Francois on role of local gateway communities. Need conversation to understand how reframing for future, how rurals are engaged with State mandates.

Stump affirmed commitment to MOU projects. Only reservation is what's going where, impact it'll have. Ironic that State bureaucracy wants immediate action. Elected to advocate for his citizens, extend to entire Mono area. Say LTC is committed to MOU process, how much. Lack of information.

Hogan thought rack record on MOUs speaks for itself. Comes down to local prioritization. Betting on rise in revenue.

Dermody stated \$49 million extremely competitive. Other areas jump on ITIP money. Maybe funding pots for SR 203 at Caltrans.

Wentworth wanted time to figure out plan, to understand. MMSA now owned by Aspen, need town infrastructure ready.

Stump thought if not give clear direction, money could evaporate. Dermody indicated not have all information, money very competitive.

Peters appreciated CTC's coming here, seeing how many STIP cycles Mono has committed. Now faced with new commitment ask. Need bigger picture.

Winzenread stated Inyo and Mono know their commitment.

Stump suggested consensus to reiterate strong commitment to MOU projects, but no specifics due to lack of information. Le Francois saw no way to list as action item.

--- Break: 10:30-10:40 am ---

B. LTC Handbook: Scott Burns noted excerpt on alternates to serve in absence of regular members. Mono has not revisited since changes in membership occurred. Commissioner Johnston had strong opinion. ESTA board members can't serve.

Hogan served many years as alternate, attended every meeting. Former County Counsel Marshall Rudolph's preference was only one alternate. Would County Counsel open it up to same alternate for all? Significant commitment of time to stay up to speed, then just watch. Maybe not have two non-elected commissioners plus Hogan. Town has elected or designated staff.

Stump thought alternate who does not attend is in awkward position. Here less than five years, he confessed to still having trouble with Caltrans acronyms. Knowing history is important. BOS has two committed to ESTA, which leaves only three. Staff serve as alternates? Need someone aware of issues. Maybe Public Works staff who listens to discussions? Suggested pre-notice to find out if attendees would arrive at 8:55 so LTC could start at 9 am. Quorum is needed.

Burns will check with County Counsel on alternates. Stump noted his current alternate, Lynda Salcido, retired from Health Department and has accepted Behavioral Health special assignment. Should alternate attend each meeting?

Burns suggested advance attendance poll and requested that Mono Supervisors revisit alternate appointments.

6. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): Jill Batchelder noted June Lake free shuttle had 682 riders, up from 403 last year. Averaged 13-16/day. Met with Supervisor Gardner on future.

Reds Meadow had ~48 service days with 103,000 passengers, on par with previous year. PCTers (Pacific Crest Trail hikers) went north, so awkward pilot year at South Lake. Must be reapproved by ESTA board.

Wentworth mentioned Reds inter-valley shuttle. Holistic conversation with NPS on how to use NPS management plan?

Dutton mentioned turnaround for old Gray Line.

Stump reported damaged bus shelter at Toms Place. *Taped off, ESTA researching repair costs.* Stump suggested requesting funds from LTC.

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Michael Draper spoke with Dick Whittington, who announced Nov. 1 retirement. *Sydney Cindy* Kelly will take over at Oct. 23 board meeting. YARTS is participating at CTC (California Transportation Commission) meeting at Mammoth.

7. CALTRANS

- A. **Senate Bill 1:** Ryan Dermody asked to defer till October.
- B. **Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Brent Green wanted to defer to CTC discussion.

8. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. **Town of Mammoth Lakes:** Grady Dutton stated Minaret Road gap closure is moving forward. Lighting is an issue. Main Street sidewalk will be completed this year. Airport: FAA requires fence, but USFS biologists oppose. Town wants support to build fence.

B. **Mono County:** Garrett Higerd noted slurry seal project on North Shore Drive, Highlands and airport aprons. Washout occurred near Tom's Place from Rock Creek debris: \$86,000. Got most feedback on street rehabilitations for Antelope Valley, Mono City, Crowley Lake and Aspen Springs.

Peters emphasized hard work on grant eligibility by CDD staff and Caltrans. Potential project at Virginia Lakes, growing year-round residency. Possible permit parking scenario.

C. **Caltrans:** Ryan Dermody noted not all projects, just major. Sheep Ranch project three years. Virginia Lakes bid not awarded, too high. Maybe next summer.

Chalfant turn pocket? *Next quarterly.*

Lee Vining ADA? Green cited more rehabs with SB 1.

9. INFORMATIONAL

- A. **SR 14 Lane Expansion:** Copy of email from constituent expressing concerns and benefits.

10. **CTC run-through:** Stump plans to attend meetings. Suggested points: 1) Let CTC know LTC is committed to MOU projects, actions with benefits across region; 2) Understand restrictions on alternative transportation. Town contribution to mass transit. 3) Impacts of freight movement by trucks. Tesla developments in Nevada affect US 395 and US 6. Smog not an issue here, but wood smoke is. Hybrids may be better solution than electric due to financial status of citizens. Can't mitigate Nevada or any other states can't control. Trying to increase efficiencies.

Hogan mentioned elevation as well. Topography/geography make us different. Green noted CTC not huge advocate of ZEVs (Zero Emission Vehicles).

Presenters showed overview for CTC. Wentworth will be master of ceremonies at CTC meeting.

11. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Winter debrief; 2) walk/bike/ride; 3) Tioga Pass, informal; and 4) STIP.

12. **ADJOURN** to ~~October 9, 2017~~ holiday, so reschedule to Oct. 23

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary