

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

October 3, 2016
(Adopted February 13, 2017)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Tim Fesko (video), Larry Johnston, Fred Stump

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

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Garrett Higerd, Megan Mahaffey, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: None

CALTRANS: Ryan Dermody, Mark Heckman

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Vice-Chair Tim Fesko called the meeting to order by video at 9:07 a.m. and requested Commissioner Stump conduct meeting 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 August 8, 2016, as amended: Item 5 graph 8: "Need track **mounts counts**, video surveillance." Include minutes from June 13, 2016, on next agenda. (*Hogan/Johnston.* Ayes: 5. Absent: *Richardson.*)

4. COMMISSIONER REPORTS: **Fesko:** Caltrans contractors/subcontractors doing great job on culverts, cuts/grinds through canyon. **Wentworth:** Council considering two efforts: 1) revitalizing downtown; and 2) bike/pedestrian/transit parking consultant to work on mobility issues. **Hogan:** Traveled to Pacific NW rural areas east of Cascades. Funding mechanism for rural counties different in OR. Obvious need exists to fix inequities between rural and urban. **Johnston:** Recognized Caltrans for intermittent rumble strips south of Ridgecrest on US 395. **Stump:** No report. **Caltrans:** Technical term for cuts/grinds is dig-outs. Work progressing on bigger projects in Mono. Snowed last night, so SRs 120, 89, 108 all closed, but 120 reopened this morning. Others may reopen later today. Closure for fire outside Minden reopened yesterday. Fire and snow closures.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. Reds Meadow Road: Scott Burns acknowledged growing commitment from Town. He met with Madera County, which seemed receptive but in deficit mode, so not big financial player. Grady Dutton invited Madera to field trip before pass closes. LTC counterpart in Madera is County Transportation Commission, which operates more on programming side. Need concurrence. In phone meeting Madera Public Works was supportive. No Mono commitments, but Town wants to play strong role.

Wentworth commented on land exchange by MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area), with artist's rendering turning SR 203 into something other than straight line, visualized as something different.

Dermody cautioned MMSA to be careful, as it could change NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. Key language is economic benefit to County and Town. Disposition of road rebuilding would be affected, as it accesses national monument. Burns thought issues could be nailed down with concurrent Specific Plan, not sequential. Commit to more of a master plan. Wentworth thought technical issues such as urban growth boundary needed resolution.

Garrett Higerd stated FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program) application is due in January. He noted key items to resolve for maintenance. Town working with USFS. If larger discussion needs to occur, should be quick. Loose ends with application are not lined out.

Burns suggested pursuing match from RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program). Projects programmed have fallen out, see if existing reserve could be part of match.

Wentworth suggested FLAP grant application early at next meeting. Stump wanted to invite INF engineering -- feds can't abscond from responsibilities. Technical implications for funding. Richardson, Holler, and Dutton need to be present. Johnston stated exchange area has nothing to do with FLAP grant. Hogan wanted to make sure NPS is in there, as Devils Postpile is small national monument. Is powerful regional office aware, maybe a partner?

Higerd confirmed INF and Town so far. Hogan thought NPS as full partner would have more oomph.

Burns recalled Grady Dutton convened meeting end of August, Deanna Dulen was there.

Wentworth thought it appropriate to involve NPS more.

Higerd cited tight time frame for Reds Meadow. Town is actual applicant, with support letters from Mono, Madera, USFS, etc. Town would coordinate maintenance.

Higerd noted FLAP program is structured to get liabilities off rolls, onto local government.

Ultimately close road? Burns stated INF has considered it.

Wentworth opined that if gateway communities got involved, moving into new era with federal government walking away from its obligations.

Higerd thought maybe finalize FLAP application at January meeting. Need significant match. \$10 million to upper \$29 million project with retaining walls on upper 2.5 miles for full two-lane or single with pullouts as now. Limiting factor is funds available with FLAP. Trying to fit large project into system could push all else off table, lead to smaller projects instead. High priority due to national monument, visitor numbers have been off the chart.

B. Transportation funding legislation: Garrett Higerd asked why talking about it after legislative session. Special transportation session through November. Some action after election is possible. More details end of August, CSAC commented. Frazier/Beall legislation includes 17 cent/gal tax, 37 cent to diesel excise tax, money from other sources. \$165/yr zero emission vehicles. Major step toward sustainability to maintain roads at local level. Recent letter from CSAC, League of California Cities encouraged state Assembly and Gov. Brown to take action. LTC already prepared letter of support to look for solutions, new letter does same. Cities received \$2.5 billion.

Johnston noted BOS took action. No inflation build-in, no indexing. Dermody noted last tax increase in 1993.

Legislation tied into cap/trade? Higerd replied yes, funding source from unallocated cap/trade funds. Board of Equalization could reset annually to match.

Stump asked about payment of CTC funding taken during economic downturn, restoration of gas tax otherwise diverted to other projects. Behind scenes money was taken for unknown purchases, maybe pet projects. Legislation on storage tax by gas stations for privilege of storing fuel to sell? Would be passed on to consumer. Higerd thought CTC was keeping promises, protecting revenues: \$706 million.

Johnston noted LTC officially supported fix. Fingers crossed that will actually do something.

Higerd mentioned "lame duck" session after election. Stump thought maybe do something then. Fesko noted gas stations pay lots of fees. Keep eye on legislation.

6. TRANSIT

A. Eastern

Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)

1. **Resolution R16-13:** Jill Batchelder described Proposition 1B as funding for safety projects. Fifteen-passenger and 20-passenger vehicles would replace aging fleet in Mammoth Lakes area. Residual funding allocated to various agencies.

Wentworth suggested an electric bus. Batchelder indicated no money for infrastructure for electric vehicles (charging stations).

Batchelder noted that Town takes away two hours from local Dial-A-Ride service. Wentworth thought policy might tie dollars to use.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R16-13 approving PTMISEA FY 2014-15 & residual funding for purchase of rolling stock. (Hogan/Wentworth. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Richardson.)

2. **June Lake Shuttle recap:** Summer ridership was disappointing despite extensive publicity.

3. **Mammoth area transit ridership:** Summer ridership set records, exceeding prior year by 5%. Passenger trips per hour increased by 10% overall in 2016. Reds Meadow service operated seven fewer days in 2016, yet exceeded 2015 by 7,680 passenger trips.

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Scott Burns said eastside summer service discontinued. Saw 44.5% increase in August. Top-level management changes did not affect too much. Yosemite visitation up 37% first six months, broke records. Construction under way in Yosemite Valley does not affect YARTS. Whittington of YARTS and Helm of ESTA serve on 5311 panel.

Batchelder noted expanded service to five days/week was awarded but Caltrans said future funding unlikely, so did not recommend expanded service.

Next ACA (Authority Advisory Committee) and YARTS meeting Oct. 19.

Batchelder stated McDonald's corporate would no longer permit bus stop, but gave OK to continue during search for new stop with amenities. Village, Black Velvet, and Vons have pros and cons.

Stump stated two Town reps thought it was not an issue, but maybe Council needs to discuss.

Easement for stops? Batchelder approved by contract with corporate real estate department. Understands McDonald's property is for sale. Launch two-week public awareness campaign before stop is moved. Could still make courtesy stop for a while. Stump noted shelter could be moved elsewhere.

--- Break: 10:35-10:45 ---

7. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. Town of Mammoth Lakes: Ribbon cutting for Lake George bike path. Airport fence issue: Dermody stated fence is in Caltrans ROW, so need to issue permit. Town could need something more significant. Zeroed in on five top spots in Mono County. Study focuses on hot spot.

Hogan wanted to make sure all players would be at table, working together. Trouble visualizing what fence will look like. Set some priorities to go for grants. Get willows out of Mammoth Creek. Maintain what have. If Town has lead, involve others to make sense out of how to proceed. Do same type as Reds Meadow Road. Can't do it piecemeal.

Johnston thought Town could avoid permit from Caltrans by putting on its own property. Chain-link fence within fence would not trap wildlife between road and fence. He stated no planes hit deer, but cars hit deer all the time. Fence was approved because FAA required it. Wentworth cited environmental concerns. Hogan thought fence should be on both sides of highway. Higerd stated airport engineer could work with FAA on alternative designs. Stump wanted to understand full scope of FAA requirements for fence.

Johnston stated that excluding deer from that section of highway would require ~~only one overcrossing~~ **undercrossings**.

Hogan: Need joint CEQA/NEPA. What has LADWP done?

Dermody stated Town completed environmental studies, USFS is separate.

Hogan wanted to visualize various land owner portions, airport pieces. Get people working together.

Dermody stated CPT (Collaborative Planning Team) will have presentation Oct. 27 with lots more agency players.

B. Mono County: Garrett Higerd noted preventative maintenance, borrowed from Caltrans efforts, Washoe County. Airport Road: \$1.25 million project for 2010-21. **Free Open**-range area attracts cattle, chickens. Check with USFS on grazing policies. Coordinate timing.

Higerd noted grant to analyze safety needs: striping, signage, guard rails, pedestrian/bike crossing. Hire consultant.

Wentworth stated closing roads was huge benefit to cyclists at Gran Fondo event.

Higerd reported Stock Drive project under way, mostly complete this week.

Johnston wanted to adopt guard rail type for Mono County. Opportunity to make unique, more park-like. Establish long-term policy. Wentworth recalled glistening guard rail showed up at Lake George, so was painted, but better to set aesthetic standards. Generate income to pay for stuff.

Burns mentioned Le Francois was at June Lake Down Canyon trail today. Success of Gull Lake trail is due to volunteer efforts. Look at tight project that could actually program in RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program). USFS wants consensus.

Bridges: Need to spend time/energy/work to update overall analysis. Functionally obsolete bridges: old, using materials no longer in service today. Bridge investment credit program would allow credit for maintenance with our funds, get match credit for larger bridge project later. Do smaller projects without

expense of federal grants and NEPA action. Bank credits for future replacement involving federal grants, NEPA. Use money from road funds to start building credits to later cash in.

Wentworth suggested infrastructure reinvestment after election.

C. **Caltrans:** Dermody indicated Walker Canyon CAPM (Capital Preventive Maintenance) has been removed from Caltrans program. Pavement in good shape compared to statewide, so Sacramento removed project.

“Midwest” guard rail is standard guard rail with **Matina Natina colored** stain applied by Hudson sprayer. Higerd cited Convict Lake bridge as an example.

Dermody noted savings statewide on ROW (right of way) funds. The CTC (California Transportation Commission) had extra money, so Freeman Gulch segment 1 may go to construction next year. SR 14 from 395/14 split past SR 178 intersection is segment one, but stops short of Lake Isabella segment. Olancha/Cartago final environmental document at end of October. Construction depends on STIP. On track, moving forward.

Johnston appreciated shoulder-widening projects. Dermody cited lots of environmental constraints. BP culverts done next week.

8. CALTRANS

A. **Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Dermody noted Brent Green attended town-hall meeting in Bakersfield hosted by Kern COG (Council of Governments), invited CTC (California Transportation Commission) to come to Eastern Sierra. The CTC will visit Mammoth Lakes Sept. 13-14, 2017. Showcased partnership, field trip to recently completed projects. Cedrik Zemitis retired, replaced by Dennee Alcalá. Meeting with USFS twice/year, found 100 dead hazard trees on highways 158, 203, 395 to remove. Caltrans does not own wood, USFS does.

Wentworth reported trails coordinator felled and hacked up 200 trees to donate to IMACA (Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action). On private property, get into work flow. Dermody will check Caltrans property as well.

Sonora Pass: Three trucks were stuck in one week. Can't prevent, but will issue citations.

Dermody noted Caltrans's commitment to CMS (changeable message signs) during deer migration.

9. INFORMATIONAL

A. **Vibrant Communities & Landscapes:** A Vision for California in 2050: Scott Burns noted State has focused on land use, regional planning, outdoor recreation, and climate change in policy documents.

Stump suggested sending Mono's General Plan, which contains all our elements already being addressed. Here's what we've done, coincides with your targets. Consider some of adopted specifics.

Wentworth cited challenges of rural counties with significant federal land. Factor into conversations for cooperative relationships so overall objectives can be realized. Incorporate component so rurals don't get left out.

Burns noted Housing Element every eight years, not four. Maybe re-adopt RTP in 2017-18. Get funding for RTP, but not Housing Element.

Johnston cited Fresno as good/bad planning, with sprawl, auto-centric, and interspersed farm land.

B. **Airport fence letters to USFS:** No comments.

10. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Reds Meadow Road, invite regional contacts for NPS/INF to meeting; 2) June 13 minutes; 3) guard rail treatment.

11. **ADJOURN** at 11:52 a.m. to November 14, 2016.

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary