

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

January 13, 2020
(Adopted February 10, 2020)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Jennifer Kreitz, John Peters, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Sandy Hogan, Lynda Salcido (absent), John Wentworth

COUNTY STAFF: Gerry Le Francois, Garrett Higerd, Bentley Regehr, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Haislip Hayes

CALTRANS: Ryan Dermody, Austin West

ESTA: Phil Moores

PUBLIC: Stacy Corless (Mono Supervisors), Rhonda Duggan, John Pinkney (Inyo LTC)

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Fred Stump called the meeting to order at 9:01 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: Table minutes of Dec. 9, 2019, work with Gerry Le Francois. Could lead into CEQA.

Wentworth requested more complete discussion than reflected in minutes. Kreitz had robust discussion about next steps on The Parcel development, HSC funding, and other issues of concern. Staff input about procedures before next update. Le Francois asked for March version of RTP on issues of airport, etc. Will post additional details. (*Peters/Hogan. Ayes: 5. Absent: Salcido.*)

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR (Town) & VICE-CHAIR (County):** Chair: Lynda Salcido. (*Kreitz/Peters. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Salcido.*) Vice-Chair: Jennifer Kreitz (*Peters/Wentworth. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Salcido.*) Stump noted busy year for LTC in 2019, SB1 money for projects, thanked staff and commission, Caltrans, Town, ESTA, Inyo LTC. Wentworth thanked Stump for grace, thoroughness, even-keeled demeanor. Others concurred.

5. **CALTRANS**

A. **Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment:** Austin West presented overview on climate change, hazard mitigation plan, vulnerability and adaptation strategies. Looking at climate models for temperature, precipitation, wildfire and wind, which are major impacts to this region. Median models for 100-year storm. Prepare state highway system for coming climate impacts. Temperatures affect landscaping, housing structures. Precipitation on evacuation routes. Prioritize ways to maintain assets, updating pavement for temperature suitable landscaping. Look at defensible spaces, dead tree removal. No timeline yet, ongoing.

Rockfall impacts? *West: Covered as side effect of precipitation and wildfire destabilizing soils. Dermody: More info later.*

Aware of Town's resilient effort? *West: Did literature review. Some overlap. Focus is State facilities, highways. Town more broadly focused.*

Wentworth: Make sure report takes idiosyncrasies of region. Internal effort? *West: Outside consultant WSB, statewide contract. Organizing timeline. Localizing to our specific region.*

Wentworth: **Recreational-partnership A sustainable recreation and tourism initiative** vulnerability assessment to climate change. Town considering consultant PlaceWorks, web information together. Consistency would be helpful to rural California. *West: All data posted publicly.*

COMMISSIONERS

Jennifer Kreitz Sandy Hogan John Peters Lynda Salcido Fred Stump John Wentworth

Weather analysis able to capture uniqueness of this area, difference from west side of Sierra? *West: Not climate modeler himself but data scientists have localized data to scale in significant level of detail. Seems well done. High-level approach. 50 square miles may lump together, not appropriate for this area.*

Hogan: Be sure Town plans included, not just Mono County, Susanville very similar.

Wentworth: Use USFS work on climate change and NPS climate data as well. Temperature changing but precipitation staying relatively consistent.

Is this final? *West: Ongoing process.* Dermody: Strategies coming later. *Kreitz: Bring back to LTC.*

Wildlife specifically? Dermody brought up at consultant meeting, not incorporated.

Wentworth: Actively engaged in natural resources, need more help.

Hogan: Lassen National Forest very similar. Inyo also.

B. Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information: Austin West announced wildlife stewardship meeting end of February with Tim Taylor; funding options. Intelligent transportation documents available, will send. Pedestrian beacons on Main Street.

Dermody: Equity big focus as well as homelessness. Looking at potential Caltrans sites for emergency temporary shelters. Focus on cities.

Wentworth: Access also. Policy description of access to recreation?

Stump: Funding to help agency with potable water, waste disposal? *Dermody: Look at, hand off to Social Services.* *Kreitz: Work with local groups like IMACA on providing services.* *Dermody: Confirmed.*

Wentworth: Meeting at South Lake Tahoe, looking at conservancy-owned land. If State owns land, do something with it. *Hogan: Inventory process first, later how to do something with it.*

Dermody: Letter to all local agencies from Sacramento. *Peters: IMACA worked on overnight parking at church long time. Safe places to park needed.*

Dermody: Will showcase quarterly report system access soon.

Origin/Destination study? *West: Year left.*

Cameras on 395? *Dermody: Try to tie in with Digital 395 for solid connection with cameras. All passes eventually will get camera systems, plus Deadman, Devils Gate.*

Radar speed signs? *West: Electrical guys overwhelmed now, but on list.*

Dermody: Press release Dec. 19 funding from CTC to Mono 395/6 chain-up areas. Extending, approving, adding chain-up areas. Funded but not to construction yet. *Stump: Extend chain-up area as escape tunnel on Hwy 6.*

6. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): Phil Moores reported ridership generally flat except Purple Line and Town Trolley. Big decline in Walker DAR (*Dial-A-Ride). Prior driver resigned, new driver reporting more accurately. Small population. Highlight of ridership was Reno run, 16% increase in passengers/service hour. Requests for Saturday service. Started preliminary financial analysis. Minor accidents by junior crew. Bottom third need more training, experience. Challenging environment for large vehicle. No injuries. Strategic business plan, small ad-hoc committee to review performance indicators. Will bring to LTC to clarify, quantify. Under budget so far but concerned about \$35,000 vehicle repair in Reno. Vehicles stretched out in maintenance programs. Increase preventive maintenance. Bought all 12 buses at same time, \$400,000 each. Cost has tripled, need to increase savings. TDA (Transportation Development Act) funds that support programs will have pressure. Inyo LTC seeing funding reduction.

Stump: Link lifeline services into program. Diesel bus creates carbon footprint but eliminates older vehicles on road.

Infrastructure? *MMSA land exchange provides logical infrastructure site. Needs are there. Huge challenges with elevation.*

Moores: Periods of 10 years pass in a flash. Met with SCE in Bishop, will deliver kilowatts for EV. Site of transformer? First step is with Bishop facility, design and engineering to include electrification plans. Mammoth facility already built out.

Wentworth: All work together. Town approved conceptual layout for The Parcel, transportation plan. Alterra wants big multi-million-dollar project at Eagle Lodge without parking. Be active participants, model of investing in electric transit. Measure U (utility user tax) has **mobility element for transit funding**.

Moores: Consider charging fare for transit. *Wentworth: Real estate developer does not want to provide parking, keep free transit alive.* Moores: If charge fare, more people would drive.

Hogan: MMSA pays third of free transit. Mitigation way back. Very important to realize MMSA has provided free transit 35-40 years. Came from a model.

Peters: ESUSD has rural school bus program. EV across rural Nevada for sports events. How address steep grades, temperature. Maybe some cross-overs. Update on Unmet Transit Needs. *Moore's*: Pass to co-executive director. Peters: Get it on calendar so can start talking to RPAC communities.

Hogan: YARTS is getting six EV buses. Potential grant application, transit professionals in Merced, Fresno talking importance of infrastructure. Hefty discussion, made sure wording not trap us into infrastructure. Five or six different options for buses.

Moore's: Grants for ZEV include infrastructure. Ask careful calculations, reporting. *Wentworth*: *Mobility Hub in town to factor in*. Moore's: Part of group, workshops.

B. Intercity Bus Operating Assistance under 5311(f): Phil Moore's noted Reno route funded by 5311(f) to maintain existing services. *Le Francois*: *Apportion this money in June annually*. Kreitz: ESTA board action last Friday.

MOTION: Authorize by Resolution R20-01 the co-executive director to sign the certification and assurances for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) continued funding for operating assistance for the 395 intercity bus routes (*Stump/Wentworth*. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: *Salcido*.)

--- BREAK: 10:05-10:25 am ---

C. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

1. **YARTS October service**: YARTS Assistant Transit Manager Cindy Kelly cited unique year on eastside. Usually opens June, last year July. NPS pays quarter million for that service, so amended agreement to run in October. Extremely popular. Ridership more than doubled expectations. What would look like going forward? Told NPS Mono not operate long enough for hikers. Extend halfway through October, weather issues later. Realistic cost extra \$19,200 annually. Immense value there. Just found out in August 2020 Tioga Road rehab starts. Limited parking in Tuolumne Meadows. Park outside park, YARTS back to vehicles. New transit manager Christine Chavez also there.

Le Francois: Minute Order from LTF reserves if increase funding. Last fiscal year \$100,000 in reserve. Running surplus, could be allocated for other needs. *Kreitz*: *Lot of pressure on funding*.

Stump: In context, looking at proposal, completely supportive. No context to evaluate funding request. Walker DAR funded from reserve.

Kreitz: Present all information on where money has gone, when coming in.

Le Francois: Significant ask when Mono allocates \$35,000.

Wentworth: Support but note recreation extending longer due to climate change. Visit California effort to promote **tourism destination stewardship**. Who's looking out for destinations sending tourists to. Update on Tioga Road rehab.

Tony Dublino: Contacted NPS to review plan, not heard back recently. Hope to during winter.

Wentworth: Reach out to Kathleen Morse. *Kreitz*: *Met her, ask about presentation*. *Wentworth*: New superintendent not named yet.

Kelly: \$35,000 plus additional \$19,200. NPS has agreements with Aramark and YARTS.

Time frame in planning extended days? *Kelly*: *Annual contract in mid-February*.

Hogan: Went from \$30,000 to \$35,000 Our issue is snow. No June service at all was vast savings to NPS. Extension into October a pilot program. *Kelly*: *No October service till 2019*.

Hogan: Had Memorial Day weekends, sometimes lost June. SRTP (Short-Range Transit Plan) pilots should be three years. Tuolumne has had free ride since 2012. Three-year pilot funded by NPS. Maybe time for Mono to allocate \$40,000. Does BOS approve? *Le Francois*: *Every June allocate LTF (Local Transportation Fund) reserves. YARTS budget at LTC. STA (State Transit Assistance) and LTF moneys. More discretion on LTF*.

Hogan: Shoulder season pilot program. June and September were weekends only. *Kelly*: *YARTS originally had one Mono bus. Second bus in 2013 to Tuolumne Meadows, ridership not great. In 2017 transitioned to two buses from Mammoth. Now, hikers take early bus, families take second bus. Wildly successful daily service. NPS \$125,000 funds transferred. NPS no longer had transportation moneys of past. Unsure how transportation is looking. YARTS must bear expenses, pay for services it operates. See if there's an interest. Mono pays \$35,000 of LTF, Merced/Mariposa year-round \$490,000 combined*.

Hogan: Percentage of county budgets. An additional \$5,000 would put Mono above other counties.

Regardless of \$19,200, increase Mono contribution? *Hogan*: *Yes. Could have snow on October 1. Huge savings last June that paid for October. Snow is our issue*.

Wentworth: Trend of snowstorms in October moving to November, shifting later.

Peters: If added \$5,000, reduce ~~\$29,200~~ \$19,200? Operates resort business, June 1-15 tourism is less than Oct. 1-15. Analysis of ridership when pass open June 1, see lot more people in October. Would

\$19,200 be reduced if pass opened late? June 15-October 15 peak season in northern gateway communities north.

Kreitz: No historic June monthly data. *Kelly: Will get data to Le Francois. When saw October numbers compared to September, \$19,200 based on service hours. Billing occurs at end of season.*

Cost savings? *Kelly: Had to make up service time so ran through October. Missed a couple days. NPS looks at service hours contracted to pay.*

Stacy Corless: YARTS JPA member. 20th anniversary. Mono involved from beginning well before saw benefits. Believed in vision of public transit to Yosemite. Urged expansion, not contraction. Think about basic premise of YARTS. Need more transit to Yosemite not less. Keep need/vision in mind.

Rhonda Duggan: Good return on investment for community? Absolutely. Worked in tour/travel industry 20 years. Tioga use evolved economically. Pushing later and later anomalies of snow in October. Pass reopens, able to operate. Mono tourism pushed shoulder season in October, wanted to extend season economically as long as can. Data showed occupancy decrease in September, huge surge in October. October tourists spend more than any other time. Empty-nesters take advantage of YARTS service. Communities see economic impact. Have service at time people want to go to Yosemite. Good return on investment Bishop also seeing great visitation later in year.

Is Feb. 10 action OK? *Kelly: Yes.*

Kreitz: More data would be helpful. Historic funding from TDA, June ridership, flexibility in shifting potentially 15 days from June to October. Alternative funding sources? Other regions benefitting. Be creative on funding. Climate and economic impacts.

Hogan: Absolutely supports October service. Never know weather. Amend cooperative agreement with NPS that takes sliding system. Snow is our reality. Need flexibility. Talks YARTS to everybody.

Peters: In short term, be decisive. Not upset working agreement. Bring back with data for future years, longer-term strategy

Stump: Financial data needed. Still in vacuum for other demands on LTF funding. Great idea, but... Can't say yes at this point. Maybe increase basic contribution. Will miss February meeting.

Kreitz: On ESTA board also, noted hourly operating costs twice ESTA's. *Kelly: Take a look, give information requested, maybe renew annually when have more data to analyze. Decisions by February to get into reservation system.*

7. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Civic Center transportation planning efforts** (request from Stump): Gerry Le Francois noted impact of move on ESTA routes, mobility hubs in town. Many staff walk regularly. ESTA has ridership by hospital.

Moore: Dial-A-Ride is door-to-door. Fixed route has two stops on Sierra Park Road.

Stump: Width of fire road? No sidewalk yet? *Higerd: 24'. Accessible parking northeast corner, accessible crosswalk on Thompsons Way. Ties to trail network.*

Sidewalk off Tavern Road? *Dublino: No. All off Thompsons Way. Want to know Town's plans on property so not demolish when Town starts construction.*

Higerd: The Town accepted Tavern Road and Thompsons Way through the Civic Center site (technically a road even through parking lot). A benefit to both the County and Town is gas tax revenue pays 50% of snow removal costs. An accessible sidewalk along Thompsons Way connects to the multi-use-path to the building. A sidewalk is not currently included for western portion of Tavern Road (between Sierra Park Road and the County building entrance). However, discussions are continuing with the Town and Hospital for additional walk-bike-ride improvements. The hospital plans to construct a new wing, and there is discussion of constructing a multi-use-path/fire lane along the south side of the parking lot.

Wentworth: Unsure jurisdictional challenge. **McFlex** parcel is joint effort. Town Council consistently not authorizing construction on site. Feet-first community. Issues of mobility and transportation critical on The Parcel. How bicycle mobility built into site. Feet-first pedestrian. Sidewalk from Sierra Park to entrance. Integrate Walk/Bike/Ride into.

Stump: Pressure just to get in center. No funding for sidewalk. Clientele across street has transportation handicaps. People can use this building. All points referenced.

Wentworth: Multi-modal transportation stuff needs to be integrated.

Kreitz: Can't think jurisdictional boundaries. Town police station next to civic center. Work with everybody, not just buses or bikes or people. Can't wait for future to make accessible to those who need to be served. Money's always an issue. Can't just leave as is. *Wentworth: Walk/Bike/Ride great input.* Peters: Mono's contributed to underground utility system. How to collaborate on sharing costs?

Wentworth: Helpful for Town Council to hear from staff on infrastructure concerns. *Hogan: Hospital still has plans.* Kreitz: The Parcel is only blocks away. *Peters: Joint Town/County meeting coming soon.* Kreitz: Highest priority is getting into building.

Dublino: Will provide big-picture view soon. Solve pedestrian issues at development. Met ADA regulations but access from Tavern or Sierra Park Road still unsettled.

Duggan: Has driven Sierra Park Road for decades, much more pedestrian, higher traffic with Starbucks than McDonald's ever experienced, expansion of hospital, residential and school nearby. Sierra Park Road has become alternate to Old Mammoth Road. Personally witnessed variety of traffic stops, speeding. Solving issue is really important. Visibility terrible coming out of hospital and other areas due to snowpack. More people taking advantage of Sierra Park Road. Blueprint of what will happen at The Parcel. How get people through there. Public safety number one.

8. ADMINISTRATION

A. **2019 RTP (Regional Transportation Plan):** Gerry Le Francois mentioned airport, The Parcel ties to Town's Mobility Element. Looks to Town staff to bring things forward. Grady Dutton and Gerry Le Francois are co-executive directors. Adopting in December put Mono on eight-year Housing Element cycle. *Stump: Salcido interested.* Le Francois: Salcido has lots of questions on transit, unmet transit needs, The Parcel playing into RTP.

Kreitz: Significance of RTP and development of The Parcel. When Town Council approved concept plan, consultants confirmed need for clearly articulated design view/vision of mobility of The Parcel. RTP will affect infrastructure.

Wentworth: Asked staff for workflow, status on RTP, sense of timing for Town's specific comments. Town Council making difficult decisions on parking, mobility.

Le Francois: Mono adopts RTP as its Circulation Element. The Parcel and civic center are involved.

Wentworth: Provide clean RTP version to LTC.

B. **2020 STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program):** Gerry Le Francois indicated no need for political representative. Proposing one change: Had programmed in \$100,000, met with engineering staff on PP&M, pull money out, put in reserve. Have \$118,000 in black, little bit of money on table. Unsure of CTC action. Least amount of money in first couple years of cycle. Fewer than 58 RTIPS, so have better idea. Le Francois will attend Orange County CTC meeting.

Stump: Remind CTC of MOUs. With turnover on CTC, good for new members to hear.

Le Francois: Here's all money Mono's sent south. MOUs expire 2022, Inyo in red for number of years. Not hopeful of new MOU with Kern. 2022 STIP right around corner. Talk of past as model.

Peters: In contact with Kern BOS chair, could approach on MOUs. *Le Francois: LTC concern of payback when MOUs expire. Lots of people aware of MOUs.*

9. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Peters:** Great opportunity for Bridgeport students at Coleville High School, very long day, one bus. Group of parents identified that ESTA bus run for non-sports kids to be back in Bridgeport at 4 pm instead of 6:30 pm. **Stump:** Similar issues in Tri-Valley for students transferred to Bishop. Kids back to Benton 6:30 or 7 pm. **ESUSD** service level there is minuscule. Driver got sick, no bus. New ESUSD superintendent. ESTA would be filling a void. **Wentworth:** Good to see Inyo LTC here. Regions Rise Together program. Working as region. Supported scenic byway and road diet. **Hogan:** K-Rail? **Dermody:** This summer. **Kreitz:** At first BOS meeting talked ALUC (Airport Land Use Commission) merger with LTC to streamline agendas, reduce staff time. Future agenda to merge commissions.

10. INFORMATIONAL

A. **SB1 \$200 million grant**

B. **FHWA Scenic Byway nomination process:** Le Francois noted grant for corridor plan. See what's involved to take 395 through as federal scenic byway. Not know details, Alicia Vennos did marketing plan, thought a good idea. Staff time to move forward.

Bring back interpretive signs along 395? *Dermody: USFS can't maintain, so Caltrans pulled out damaged signs. CPT subcommittee and Matt Paruolo involved. Nobody stepping up. Caltrans would pay for structure.*

Hogan: Contact Nancy Upham, formerly USFS.

Dermody: Money may come back someday.

Le Francois: Town Visitor Center was TDA program. If funding available, already have byway in place.

State designation carry weight with feds? *Le Francois: Mountain Gate south on 395.*

C. **Road Diet:** Dermody: Public outreach with two attendees on Hwy 168 hospital to Manor Market. *Stump: Maintain center lane.* Dermody: Inconsistent center lane now. Met with tribal council, on board.

11. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) December minutes; 2) unmet needs; 3) YARTS resolution, LTF reserve for pilot program; 4) Tioga Road construction; 5) RTP timeline; 6) ALUC incorporation into LTC; 7) 5311 resolution; 8) draft OWP amendment for 2021-22; 9) CTC recommendation on STIP

12. **ADJOURN** at 11:54 am to February 10, 2020

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC clerk