



# CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA

MONO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM & FILM COMMISSION

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## MINUTES

Regular Meeting of Tuesday, July 31, 2018 – 10:00 AM

June Lake Community Center

90 W. Granite Ave. - June Lake, CA 93529

1. Call to Order.
2. Introductions and announcements.  
Commissioners: Wendy Schneider, Sarah Walsh, Michael Vanderhurst, Steve Morrison, Geoff McQuilkin, Jimmy Little  
Staff: Alicia Vennos, Jeff Simpson, Liz Grans  
Other: Bob Gardner (District 3 Supervisor), John Peters (District 4 Supervisor), Matt McClain (Mammoth Lakes Recreation), Emily Woods (Mammoth Lakes Recreation), Jason Canger (Mono County Counsel)
3. Opportunity for the Public to Address the Commission. No public comment.
4. Approval of the Minutes from the April 26, 2018 special meeting.  
MOTION: Vanderhurst; SECONDED: Schneider. APPROVED: 5/0, no abstentions (Jimmy Little absent at this time)
5. Monthly Financial/Budget Report – Budget Amendment; Review of Discretionary Budget Items.  
The FY 18-19 Operating Budget was adopted by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in June. Once the fund balance has been determined, discretionary fund requests will be reviewed and approved in September (tentatively scheduled for September 18). Department requests, or requests that pass through the Economic Development department, include the following:  

<b>Community Support Budget Unit</b> (not prioritized) Air Service Subsidy (\$100,000) – Mammoth Lakes Tourism261 Trail Maintenance Grant (\$27,500) – Friends of the Inyo Community Event Marketing Fund (\$30,000) Historical Societies Grant Fund (\$6,000) Performing and Visual Arts Fund (\$10,000) Youth Sports (\$8,000) Eastern Sierra Inter-Agency Visitor Center (\$5,000)	<b>Economic Development Budget Unit</b> 1. Economic Development Marketing (\$18,500)* <b>Tourism Budget Unit</b> 1. Film Commission Marketing (\$5,000) 2. California State Fair County Exhibit (\$5,000) <b>Fish Enhancement Budget Unit</b> 1. Travel reimbursement for volunteer Commissioners to monthly meetings (\$3,737) 2. Fish Stocking Program (\$100,000) 3. Fish & Wildlife Commission Discretionary Fund (\$25,000)
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After discussion about several variables, staff and Commission agreed that funding requests from external agencies or community organizations should be prioritized by the Board.

*\*The Economic Development budget was cut by 40%, so staff will also be asking for that funding to be reinstated.*

6. Economic Development/Tourism Report.

West side wildfires, smoke and closure of Yosemite Valley will impact summer business levels in the Eastside but to what extent is still unknown. Staff were part of a conference call with Visit California and their “crisis support” team is dealing with the negative perception visitors have of the entire state with several active wildfires. Mr. Simpson reported that Booking.com canceled 3,000+ room nights in the Yosemite area – mostly on the west side, but some businesses in Mono County were affected as well. Booking.com is not charging commissions, businesses have been instructed to invoice Booking.com for any lost revenue.

7. Dewatering of Mono County Ranchlands and Habitat.

Supervisors Peters and Gardner updated the Commission on the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s (LADWP) plan to cease providing water to LADWP leased properties in the Long Valley area. Discussion ensued regarding impacts on ranching, agricultural, tourism and environmental issues. Matt McClain and Emily Woods from Mammoth Lakes Recreation (MLR) shared that MLR has spearheaded the campaign to “Keep Long Valley Green” and is distributing posters and digital marketing materials in order to advertise public comment during the August 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting.

MOTION: LITTLE moved that the Commission write a letter to Mayor Garcetti opposing the dewatering of Mono County ranch lands. SECONDED: WALSH. APPROVED: 6/0, no abstentions

8. Research – Update on Economic Impact & Visitor Profile Survey, Business Retention & Expansion Survey (BR&E), Advertising Conversion Study, Chico State County Profile Study.

The summer phase of the four-part (by season) visitor research is underway. Staff should have preliminary results at the next meeting. The Business Retention and Expansion Survey has closed; the consultant is now working on analysis. The Visa View report shows domestic and international spending in Mono County increased about 30% during Quarter 2 (October, November and December). Staff shared the draft Economic Profile Study compiled by the Center for Economic Development at California State University, Chico.

9. Fisheries Commission Report. Due to timing, this item was tabled.

10. Film Commission Update.

Mr. Morrison and Ms. Vennos provided an update on recent film productions. Besides two feature films, several significant commercials are also filming or scouting in the area (Acura, Hollister clothing, PacSun store, Orville tv program). Destination Polaris is filming at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area next week. “Island Plaza” is scouting the area now (major actor/film production).

11. Project Status Update:

a. Collateral – Community Maps: The first two community maps (Lee Vining, Bridgeport) were very well received by businesses. Design for June Lake and Walker/Coleville community maps is underway. Staff would love input from the Commission on ideas for expanding the 2019 visitor guide.

b. Public Relations

c. Advertising/Social Media/E-Newsletter

Film advertising in international and domestic Locations Magazine.

Seeing a boost in requests for information after Economic Development campaigns run (Facebook, TV, etc.). We’re the first point of contact for relocating, new businesses, etc.

d. Website

e. Tradeshows & Conferences: The Mono County booth received a gold ribbon award at the California State Fair. The phenomenal display created by Fashion Stables for the County also received two of four “special” awards – best use of products and artifacts and best use of technology. There were only 17 counties participating this year (lower than usual), but over 800,000 people visited the fair. Staff also received a California Association of Local Economic Development (CALED) Merit Award at the annual CALED conference in March in Monterey, CA.

12. Commissioner Reports.

Sarah Walsh: The Bluesapalooza event in Mammoth Lakes brings a lot of business to June Lake. The Chamber of Commerce is being reinvigorated; the June Lake Little Loopers organized horse camps and day-camps for local kids and is working on offering swim lessons at June Lake.

Wendy Schneider: Jam-packed summer schedule for Friends of the Inyo including trail work, interpretive hikes, educational programs.

Geoff McQuilkin: Lee Vining is very busy, unfortunately a little smoky. Caltrans has been soliciting input on the Highway 395 Rehabilitation Project from Highway 167 and Highway 120.

Michael Vanderhurst: Mammoth Lakes is booming. Alaska Airlines service ends in November; new United Airlines service fills in starting December with new daily service to Denver. JetSuite X air service may also be expanding. Several new businesses have opened or expanded in town including Elixir Superfoods, Bleu Market & Kitchen, and The Warming Hut.

Jimmy Little: Glenda Williamson from Mono County Social Services spoke at a Bridgeport Chamber meeting about workforce service programs. Big Meadow Brewing opened just before the Fourth of July. Late August/early September reservations are strong.

Steve Morrison: Mammoth Mountain's mega-zipline and new climbing course (Via Ferrata) are under construction – the Via Ferrata will be opening very soon.

13. Call for agenda items for next regular meeting. None.

14. Adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 10:00am at the Lee Vining Community Center at 296 Mattly Ave. - Lee Vining, CA 93541.