

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

May 13, 2013
(Adopted June 10, 2013)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Tim Fesko, Larry Johnston, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Jo Bacon, Sandy Hogan, Matthew Lehman

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Garrett Higerd, Mary Booher, Jeff Walters, C.D. Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Peter Bernasconi

CALTRANS: Forest Becket

ESTA: John Helm, Jill Batchelder

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Larry Johnston called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and Commissioner Bacon led the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

3. **MINUTES:** April 8, 2013

MOTION: Adopt minutes of April 8, 2013, as amended: 1) Add to Item 5D: **MOTION:** *Send letter to governor's office, where decisions are made, and also to CTC and legislators, including last letter as well. (Hogan/Stump. Ayes: 5. Absent: Lehman.);* and 2) Item 5G: Commissioner ~~Hogan~~ **Johnston** reported that California Department of Fish and Wildlife agrees with deer/snow/safety fence along SR 203 and US 395 to airport (item 14) and **Commissioner Hogan** thought maybe the project could qualify for State Highway Operation & Protection Program (SHOPP). *(Hogan/Bacon. Ayes: 4. Abstain: Lehman due to absence, Fesko.)*

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** Lehman: Kudos for removing snow stakes. Fesko: Great progress on School Street Plaza in Bridgeport, additional walkways. Stump: Thanks for Chalfant bus stop pending approval from LADWP, design and funding completed. Johnston: Traveled over Tioga, virtually no snow.

5. ADMINISTRATION

A. **Unmet Needs Resolution R13-04:** Wendy Sugimura sent to all RPACs except Long Valley, which canceled two meetings. First need: Midweek Chalfant to Bishop. Cost: \$40,000 included anticipated revenue. Options: Reduce reserve by about 7%. Current route operates only two days/week. Shoppers, workers, students? John Helm indicated Tuesday/Thursday is designed for shoppers, not commuters or students.

Chalfant RPAC comment: Residents make many trips shuttling, practice, to/from work. Aim route at commuters 8-5, students could work around timing. Helm reminded that vanpool option doesn't exclude students. Cost of \$40,000 is fixed route, not vanpool, which is fully funded by riders who pay daily whether use or not. Sugimura noted no allocation from LTC for vanpool.

Commissioner Stump cited an ongoing request from Chalfant (bedroom community to Bishop), predicting increased ridership. Some residents live meagerly and would use the service. Change time? Helm noted a weekday route in addition to Benton-Bishop. Survey for vanpool market? Sugimura discussed actually funding, directives to ESTA, working with Social Services Transit Advisory Committee (SSTAC) volunteer to provide limited services. Stump indicated SSTAC wanted to use Benton community center for its office. No firm answer. If route were approved for one year and ridership fell short, would potential layoff or vehicle disposal occur? Helm confirmed enough fleet for additional route, non-benefitted driver (no guarantee of hours, so no layoff).

Commissioner Bacon wanted more information before approving additional service. Commissioner Johnston thought if commuter-oriented need exists, vanpool seems way to go (cheaper than car, not affect reserves). Commissioner Hogan thought a one-year pilot was not nearly enough. Conduct a survey on how many would use 8-5er or vanpool. Johnston noted two buses at Chalfant, none at June Lake, so leaned toward vanpool. Who actually would ride? Helm indicated a simple official survey, outlining vanpool and fixed route. Affect resolution? Burns indicated bus route could be initiated outside unmet needs process.

MOTION: Approve Unmet Needs Resolution R13-04. (*Bacon/Fesko. Ayes: 5. No: Stump.*)

In discussion after motion was seconded, Commissioner Stump suggested rewording to “*due to lack of financial capability.*” Concern was already covered in the definition of “reasonable to meet,” so motion stood as stated.

B. 2012-13 Overall Work Plan (OWP) amendment #2: Mary Booher indicated process would not be complete till next fiscal year. Yellow highlights? *Dollar amounts changed.* Mailboxes: Jeff Walters inventoried >400 mailboxes, about 75 were questionable and probably those at risk would reduce significantly. Commissioner Johnston stated this inquiry was a Grand Jury request.

C. 2013-14 OWP: Note: Mary Booher’s staff report was inadvertently omitted. No estimated rollover until amount is known. Need staff-estimated cost of work elements. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) plan was carried over to Dec. 31, 2013. Commissioner Hogan noted missing County info several places. P. 136-137: Shift headings from Town/County/Total to Total/Town/County. Submit to Caltrans a rollover allocation report by December. Forest Becket noted LTC also would take action on approving signing of certifications and assurances; should submit all at once. Would LTC priorities fit into this? *Fit into some work elements, but some require project study reports.* Scott Burns suggested staff incorporate into Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

MOTION: Approve 2013-14 OWP with technical corrections. (Lehman/Fesko. Ayes: 5-0 **6-0.**)

D. MAP-21: Gerry Le Francois reported California Transportation Commission (CTC) met Tuesday to consider various assumptions for the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) fund estimate. Included in this item is administration’s proposal to combine various trail/pedestrian programs into one process. The former Transportation Enhancement (TE) is Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) under MAP-21, and the Governor’s proposal is called Active Transportation Program (ATP). As discussed with this commission, the funding formula is population based. Staff is concerned about how local and/or rural projects may have a hard time competing on a statewide basis for 50% of the total funding allocation to ATP.

By the next meeting, staff hopes to have a reasonable idea of fund shares for the 2014 STIP that may be available for Mono County. The fund estimate is adopted by the CTC in August. The 2014 STIP provides for a new five-year programming cycle for local and regional transportation projects.

Commissioner Stump noted Chalfant streets are in planning phase; would funding stay or disappear? Individual project components cannot be programmed. The complete project is required to be programmed through construction in order to get allocation approval to build the project. Garrett Higerd saw a chance that CTC could delay one year; funded but not allocated list. Le Francois noted past state Legislatures borrowed from state highway fund for everyday bills. Money would come back eventually to repay those loans. Staff reported that corrections at local level are going through counsels, will bring drafts of proposed changes to LTC next month. The more in the STIP process, the better, as Mono is factored in with 13 counties, not entire state.

E. 2011-12 LTC audit report: Mary Booher solicited questions. Commissioner Bacon asked if LTC did last audit’s recommendations. Did we fix what’s wrong? *No response in past audits. Staff made Herculean efforts to work cooperatively and made progress. New finance director should clean up last audit.* Bacon suggested some place to say it’s been resolved. Booher will provide next month, work with auditor to incorporate in future years.

6. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

A. Resolution of Appreciation to Brad Mettam: Scott Burns reported a well-attended sendoff, where several Mono representatives spoke. Commissioner Hogan described Mettam as always impressive, saw big picture, had every detail at his grasp. Commissioner Johnston read aloud the resolution.

MOTION: Approve resolution of appreciation to Brad Mettam. (*Johnston/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.*)

B. LTC priorities: Commissioner Bacon noted similarities between lists. Funding sources? Items are listed but no funding is available. Separate meeting to delve into it, create one list. If LTC keeps delaying, not going to

get to it. Identify purpose, what to do with it, how to pursue. Commissioner Fesko noted he supported items stated by others, so didn't list them. Commissioner Johnston saw some as maintenance, others long term. Set workshop at end of meeting. Staff would know about funding sources.

Johnston distributed a draft deer safety project map created with Tim Taylor of California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), showing four or five crossings and an 8' combo snow/deer fence on southwest side of US 395. Commissioner Lehman opposed a fence on that "beautiful stretch of road." Johnston claimed the fence was not that intrusive; have CDFW explain. Johnston noted deer already use Mammoth Creek crossing, but it needs clearing up. Fence would exclude deer from airport runways and is not dependent on Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval. Johnston stated deer/car collisions cost thousands of dollars. Commissioner Stump described that section of US 395 as a "kill zone," vehicle damage, injuries. Johnston suggested building fence in phases, with undercrossing at strategic locations. Mary Booher cited this as a perfect example of project study, phasing, and funding. Peter Bernasconi referred to five-year biological study next fiscal year.

Fesko cited proposed project south of Walker to Burcham Flat Road, which Antelope Valley RPAC overwhelmingly opposed. Boxed in area, visual aspects a concern. Proceed with caution. Commissioner Hogan noted Lake Tahoe area has unobtrusive fence. Nevada has effective undercrossings and overcrossings as well. Beautiful metal sculptures of animals serve a purpose.

7. TRANSIT

A. **Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA):** Jill Batchelder noted Reno/Lancaster route has operated since 1990s. From January through March 2013 ESTA provided 416,719 passenger trips in Mono County, a huge increase of 312,820 riders from previous year, primarily due to addition of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area routes. Otherwise, total ridership was down by 8,837 passengers. Mammoth Dial-A-Ride lost ridership, likely due to large amount of free transit available.

Resolution R13-05 was not on agenda. Application is due at end of month, so add urgent item:

MOTION: Add "urgent" agenda item: "I move that the commission determine that there is a need to take immediate action with respect to the proposed agenda item, that the need for action came to the County's attention subsequent to the agenda being posted and, therefore, that the commission add the item to the agenda." (*Bacon/Fesko. Ayes: 6-0.*)

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R13-05 approving and authorizing the executive director to sign all required certifications and assurances for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(F) continued funding for operating assistance for the 395 interregional bus route. (*Fesko/Hogan. Ayes: 6-0.*)

B. **Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Scott Burns noted Tioga Pass is open due to low snow amount. Commissioner Fesko noted everyone was happy it's open early, but could have opened earlier.

8. **CALTRANS:** None.

9. QUARTERLY REPORTS

A. **Town of Mammoth Lakes:** Peter Bernasconi noted Measure R funds additional interpretive signs. Commissioner Stump wondered why Department of Justice (DOJ) was reviewing contractor payroll records. *Projects awarded by USFS had major discrepancies (prevailing wage issue).* A few aspens would help shield eyesore equipment shed on Lakeview Road. Proposed traffic signal at Sierra Nevada Road/Meridian was opposed by Commissioner Johnston. Stump wondered if Mammoth Unified School District (MUSD) participated in safe routes to school. *Commissioner Bacon replied that money gets pedestrians all over town, not just to schools.* Johnston commended the Town as exceptional at securing grants. Commissioner Hogan cited local resistance to trails programs, noting residents don't realize many millions come as grants.

B. **Mono County:** Bridgeport: Garrett Higerd announced School Street Plaza is under way, Bridgeport street rehabilitation soon. No July Fourth construction will occur in Bridgeport even though rehab will not be completely finished. Preconstruction meeting next week to discuss details. June Lake: Pedestrian component to June Lake street rehabilitation, sidewalk. Chalfant: Does not want sidewalks, but needs rehabilitation of asphalt, including White Mountain Estates Road.

Bridges: Walters met with consultants and Caltrans bridge expert. Bridge projects require local match, and entail long, costly process. Caltrans expert suggested one bridge at a time, Topaz first. Budget has \$12,000. Higerd noted replacement costs are much higher for permitted, engineered, planned bridges. Walters indicated retrofit replacement was discussed for Cunningham Bridge, which is historic to residents. Rock Creek Road: Eastside Velo sent letter of support for upper road. Convict Lake Road: Grant application was submitted April 30, also with Eastside Velo support. Bus shelter in Chalfant was approved by LADWP, so now only needs Mono building permit. Owens River Road: Pave Gorge Road to Watterson Summit. Le Francois quoted a "Bradism": "Just because it seems outrageous doesn't mean it couldn't be on the list." Johnston recalled lots of streets got paved with help from MOUs.

C. **Caltrans:** Forest Becket indicated it's easier combining Inyo/Mono on a map. Commissioner Hogan found the map helpful. Sign replacement and restriping are occurring. Commissioner Fesko observed that restriping in area north of Bridgeport in February is all gone now. Plans to restripe? *Working north as things warm up. Rock bulges at High Point are fixed.* No accidents, so leave it as is! Commissioner Stump commented that the roadway hugs the hillside now, but will be far away when complete. Becket indicated the 25-mph construction speed was set by state law, and CHP has been citing violators.

Commissioner Johnston opined that chip-seal project is unacceptable to cyclists, and he's been getting serious complaints. Cars smooth out surface, so cyclists move into traffic lane. Chips never go away on shoulder, so why put them there? Experiment is slightly improved, but still unacceptable and unnecessary. Stump suggested adding more oil to make shoulder last longer.

Johnston stated there's no question Eastern Sierra has the best roads, thanks to Caltrans.

10. **INFORMATIONAL**

A. **High Point Curve update #15**

B. **2014 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fund Estimate**

11. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Local Transit Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) allocations; 2) MOU drafts for Eastern Sierra Transportation Planning Partners (ESTPP); and 3) audit. Chair Johnston suggested a short business agenda and a workshop on LTC priorities list (bring giant post-its, Wendy to facilitate), ending in time for Mono picnic at 11:30. Lehman will be absent, but will provide photos.

12. **ADJOURN** at 11:28 a.m. to June 10, 2013.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, LTC secretary