

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

May 9, 2016
(Adopted June 13, 2016)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Tim Fesko, Larry Johnston, Fred Stump

TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Sandy Hogan, Dan Holler for Shields Richardson, John Wentworth

COUNTY STAFF: Scott Burns, Jeff Walters (videoconference), Megan Mahaffey, Wendy Sugimura, Garrett Higerd, Courtney Weiche, CD Ritter

TOWN STAFF: Grady Dutton

CALTRANS: Brent Green, Dennee Alcala, John Fox, Craig Holste, Greg Miller

ESTA: John Helm, Jill Batchelder

GUESTS: Liz O'Sullivan

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Vice-Chair Tim Fesko called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes, and attendees recited the pledge of allegiance.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Liz O'Sullivan, Sierra Paradise, sent letter on behalf of 20 community residents on deer mortality. Take whatever measures are necessary. Evidence on pavement of animals blown apart. Has seen needless slaughter, damage to motoring public for 20 years. Shoulder seasons fairly quiet, but increased tourism has led to more traffic.

Grady Dutton, Town staff, announced repaving Old Mammoth Road from Main Street to Sherwin Creek Road. Reds Meadow meeting with NPS/USFS, hope to report later. Town staff signed document this morning on Main Street sidewalk project to be advertised in July.

3. MINUTES

MOTION: Adopt minutes of April 11, 2016, as amended: P. 2, Hogan report: YARTS Authority Advisory Committee met last week. (Wentworth/Hogan. Ayes: All. Absent: Holler for Richardson.)

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Stump:** Submitted comments on US 6 past deadline, Caltrans acknowledged. **Johnston:** CSAC May 19, report on fix our roads. **Hogan:** None. **Wentworth:** Attended Tahoe Trails Summit on multi-use path integrated into all recreation amenities at Moab. Trailhead pickups are part of that. Communities integrating travel/road into trails component. **Fesko:** None.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Unmet Transit Needs:** Wendy Sugimura indicated this action meets State requirements. Input from RPACs, Town, and SSTAC (Social Services Transportation Advisory Council) was evaluated against State's definition of unmet need. Revised page 1 of chart was distributed. After reviewing all needs and resources availability, only one unmet need was reasonable to meet. Unmet needs would be funded before any moneys would go to roads.

Stump understood money issues, but was concerned about sweeping actual grounds under rug. He had questions about ESTA budgeting. "Not reasonable to meet" needs still are needs. Some way to acknowledge a need even if it can't be met, instead of calling it "not reasonable." Sugimura indicated progress, but did not want to be under legal hammer.

Hogan noted that over time, items recur. New families moving in want services. Consider "trail angels," volunteers who love hiking, to provide service. RPACs could create wish lists.

Fesko stated private sector provides service in Bridgeport.

Wentworth noted process is laid out by State. Eastern Sierra Expanded Transit System had 30-40 stakeholders funded by left-over ~~USFS~~ NPS money.

Sugimura saw value in annual review, reevaluating new data. Look at variety of solutions outside this process before allocating more money to solve problem. Maybe evening service is best solution.

--- Alternate Commissioner Holler arrived at 9:27 a.m. ---

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R16-10 on Unmet Transit Needs as amended (*Johnston/Stump. Reflect vice chair signature. Ayes: 6-0.*)

B. Adjust 2015-16 Overall Work Program (OWP) budget: Megan Mahaffey described the budget as a standard item, showing all work elements along with associated dollars.

Ability to carry over? Mahaffey: PPM (Planning, Programming & Monitoring) has three years to amend.

Mammoth Lakes Mobility? Dutton cited an environmental consultant, hearing set in June.

Johnston questioned regional Project Study Reports (PSR) at \$20,000. What do they get? Burns cited focus on Bridgeport Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant in past, to consultant to update, Sugimura is working on it. Policy item to help on future grants. PSR on 395, physical improvements.

Sugimura's time is covered by ATP, consultant money funded by PSR. Application reflects reduced work, nearly funded two years ago. Bridgeport qualifies as disadvantaged community. Planned are curb extensions, rapid flashing beacons by schools, decorative solar pedestrian lights outside courthouse, and banner. Construction funding is lacking on banner, working on maintenance plan.

Higerd stated Public Works is working on it as well, with Sugimura taking the lead. Revised scope, ATP is evolving. Make sure competitive by application deadline mid-June, take to Mono Supervisors.

Other item? Burns cited June Lake Down Canyon Trail; not enough to fund consultant. Courtney Weiche is outlining issues to address. Still need to work with public.

Johnston asked if PSR is completed for Town. Every year PSRs are line item. Would like to see it on agenda, what LTC did. Status of deer mortality; bantering for years. Fencing/overcrossing? Should show LTC is working on it. Mahaffey recalled undercrossing was big idea, but cost concerns arose. Johnston heard Caltrans is taking it on, not LTC. Some confusion, no progress.

Sugimura noted feasibility study is under way to determine area, options, mortality rates, how to handle. Coordinate with CDFW (California Department of Fish & Wildlife). Johnston wanted clarification on when get something. Where should it be? PSR? SHOPP (State Highway Operation & Protection Program)?

Green expected feasibility to be completed in June, return to LTC July or August to describe. Got federal grant to look at what's been done. Huge need.

Stump suggested a feasibility study where Convict Creek crosses under US 395. Large overgrown culvert may be insufficient size. Greg Miller stated culvert originally was for cattle. Johnston walked through culvert with CDFW's Tim Taylor. Coordinate with Town's airport fencing. Talk about it every meeting.

Hogan recalled a plan for Sonora Junction, but wetlands interfered. Coordination issues with agencies take a long time. Meanwhile, Stump stated, creatures are paying price. Red smears on highways continue. Hate to see bureaucracies grind along at expense of creatures.

Johnston wanted to see progress. Have something shelf-ready. Deer fencing along Hwy 580 in Reno looks efficient. Hogan noted priorities change. Fesko wanted to keep as priority for LTC.

MOTION: Approve Minute Order M16-01 adjusting 2015-16 Overall Work Program (OWP) budget (*Wentworth/Stump. Ayes: 6-0.*)

C. 2016-17 Overall Work Program (OWP): Megan Mahaffey moved to next OWP. Draft incorporated comments on last draft from Town and Caltrans.

Stump noted no mention of development on US 6. Insert: "And potential business park development in Nevada." Tesla is just first to come along.

Wentworth found OWP easy to follow. Regional trails: Overwhelmed at conference on trails regarding economic survivability. Staff travel to communities where lessons have been learned. Town hired someone from Susanville.

Burns stated word from headquarters was to be more general, so integrate programs(s) elsewhere.

Wentworth noted British Columbia has model. Airport planning: Town Counsel is ready for heavy financial lifting on this due to value of good, reliable air service to everyone. Stump asked if environmental group federal appeals hearing will be held next few weeks to lift injunction at airport? Dutton stated injunction is about 2003 lawsuit. Need EIS (Environmental Impact Study) if not lifted.

Wentworth indicated National Scenic Byway designation has changed. Scenic benefits, branding of US 395.

Burns noted Mahaffey received grant extension. Complementary effort on SR 120, hope to coordinate this summer. Funding has faded, so need to integrate other efforts. Staging area for trails. Tracking legislation should continue as LTC focus.

Alternative fuel: Electric highway program Reno to Las Vegas.

Burn noted an interest in that. Drafted initial policy, shown to Lee Vining. Tesla facilities in Mammoth Lakes and Topaz. Hope for policy on siting facilities along US 395.

MOTION: Approve Minute Order M16-02 adopting 2016-17 Overall Work Program (OWP)
(Hogan/Wentworth. Ayes: 6-0.)

Stump requested Burns report on staffing capability to work on all various issues. Maybe need to prioritize.

D. California Transportation Commission recommendations regarding the 2016 STIP: Gerry Le Francois reported that he and Courtney Smith attended CTC meeting, made case for small fish in big pond, but part of southern tier counties, which get more money. Mono went above and beyond reduction targets, but was not enough. Other counties didn't make enough cuts, but some smaller counties did. Freeman Gulch (FG) funded by Inyo and Mono. Still no construction till 2019-20.

Why zero? Le Francois cited over-commitment in prior RTIPs; e.g., Placer County. Urban areas tend to be "takers." FG could go early if things substantially improve. Maybe go back to Kern COG for its 40% of project. Olancho/Cartago pre-construction elements funded to keep moving forward. Local projects got pushed back by CTC, which also defunded projects. Olancho/Cartago funding is off table at this point. FG never was funded through construction. Those projects were on at same time, so maybe bar was not so high. Mono and Inyo paid \$40 million into Olancho/Cartago alone. Correction p. 66: Push \$50,000 to 2017-18. No ESTA buses included.

Revisit program, ESTA? Le Francois thought that if legislation finds fix to funding issues, maybe paradigm would change.

Wentworth observed projects were getting deleted. Asked to look for alternative funding sources. Le Francois stated Mono County did right by dire need to find a fix.

Holler cited discussion right now at State. Fully refunding rejected. Not in interest of Gov. Brown, who wants to advance something for transportation. Maybe it'll come to a head.

Wentworth saw a need to think about next year, how to address this. Look at federal roads as well. Hogan viewed LTC's job as prioritizing funding. Staff and ESTA go after grants constantly.

Johnston: State legislature let this happen, let gas tax go down to 12.8 cents/gallon, now 9.8. Who let that happen? Not us. Should have indexed it years ago. Infighting among Democrats/Republicans.

Higerd noted CEQA and NEPA could get stale in planning time. Do right thing at right time. Making that decision three to four years in advance is not right call.

--- Break: 10:20 – 10:25 ---

6. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA): Jill Batchelder reported big increase in transit use in non-drought year. Moving impressive numbers of riders. Coordination of ridership with weather? Not now. ML and Walker Dial-A-Ride (DAR) below fare box 10%. Batchelder cited more service in town to ski area and Mammoth Express. Helm reported several MMSA routes discontinued in late January last year.

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS): Scott Burns noted visitation way up in 100-year anniversary (Aug. 27). Park visitation first quarter up 37%. Expecting active year once SR 120 route starts. Concern at NPS level. Come up with alternative transportation on east side.

Longstanding secretary of YARTS just retired. Fox report on YARTS may be good publicity.

7. CALTRANS

A. **Caltrans Pavement Maintenance Strategies:** MAP-21: Keep good roads good by right treatment on right road at right time (3 Rs).

John Fox touted seal coats and/or asphalt rubber to keep road good. Pavement deteriorates. Treatment can extend service life way beyond expectancy. Pavement inventory: 2,400 lane miles of flexible pavement, maybe on low side. Pavement programs: SHOPP Capital Preventive Maintenance. Not enough funding for 3Rs leads to reactive action. Fog seal, seal coat or thin blanket. Chip seals work best for reflective cracks. Once road starts cracking, downhill from there. Chip seal Long Valley section: Thermal cracks. Aggressive forces. Double chip seal to reduce severity of cracks, some 16" wide. Bikes: Steel wheel roller works to control abrasion of chip seal. Won't stay, but is good place to start.

Johnston noted it's remarkable how good Mono's roads are. Good job keeping up when funding not there. Chip seal is worst thing in world for cyclists. Paved area chip seal gets smoothed out, but shoulder has no compacting. How balance effectiveness vs. abrasiveness. Road bike tires feel it. Fox noted chip seals on SR 120 where no shoulders exist.

Johnston mentioned airport road's gigantic gaps. Recommendations for cracks?

Fox cited cold mix/hot mix. Cut and fill. Cracks continue to grow. Grind up road and start over with thermal cracks. Ugly cracks on SR 120 east. Even virgin asphalt has lots of cracks.

Higerd asked when 3/8" rubber chip does not work. Fox stated get larger cracks before using chip seal. Thermal cracks are aggressive. Higerd noted Mono roads are subject to thermal cracking.

Fox suggested going to another oil that performs better at lower temperatures. Only a few aggregate sources are available.

--- Fesko passed gavel to Stump, departed at 11:09 a.m. ---

B. **Transportation Concept Report: US 6:** Dennee Alcala received comments from Commissioner Stump. If see something, apprise by end of May. Internal discussions about previous report recommended 20-year concept. Re-analyzed four-lane expressway, US 6 will remain two-lane highway. Left turn pocket at Chalfant Road not programmed, but on minor list of projects. Maybe within two to three years.

Hogan thought increased truck traffic deserved mention. Alcala could incorporate into document, but no quantified data on Reno Industrial complex. Stump thought it safe to assume truck traffic will not decrease.

Alcala cited routing toward Las Vegas. Bigger discussion is Eastern Sierra Corridor goods movement study. See how Reno/Tahoe, Moreno Valley may affect Mono County.

Stump wanted interconnectivity within Nevada. Tesla in Southern California does not go to Las Vegas. Assume US 6 will continue to be impacted.

Is there data to make determination? Green said freight/goods movement is huge in CA now.

Stump stated [Tesla] project currently is developing. How to look at buildout to project truck traffic? Maybe additional mitigations, such as three lanes and/or passing lanes if US 6 remains two-lane road. Planning Commission approved subdivision in Tri-Valley, with expanding population. Chalfant is now bigger than June Lake as affordable place to live. Kids cross US 6 to get to park. Which kid has to die getting to school bus stop – do something about speed limit. Headquarters quashed this. Now K-5 kids get bused to Bishop. Didn't want to see document outstripped in four to five years. Advocate for regulatory relief on speed limits. Green cited hearing mostly about reducing speeds, but speed studies likely would result in increase instead of decrease.

Stump suggested ~~changing 65 mph to 60 mph~~ pursuing state legislation to allow Caltrans to reduce speed below 60 mph through Chalfant. Friend killed when trying to get back across highway, T-boned by truck doing 65-70 mph. Putting it in a document highlights it.

Johnston cited bad planning to put Chalfant on both sides of highway. Shot selves in foot.

Hogan asked if traffic calming was mentioned. Alcala looked to Mono and Chalfant on what's allowable along highway. Hogan recalled that slowing traffic in Lee Vining really worked.

Stump asked why County should look at state highway. Alcala stated the community didn't want growth, but landscaping and sidewalks could help.

Passing lanes? Not a lot of traffic, so why need passing lane? Hogan cited Montgomery Pass. Stump noted road undulates. Alcala indicated passing lane takes away passing on opposite side. Johnston noted coming down Montgomery Pass, truck move faster going downhill.

Alcala stated speed differential needs at least two levels. Stump mentioned farm equipment on US 6, as farming occurs on both sides of road. Johnston suggested Caltrans consider Nevada development, passing lanes, traffic calming, speed limits, and pedestrian crossing at Chalfant.

Stump thought a 20-yr document should show flexibility

Liz O'Sullivan asked how CHP factors into this. Lee Vining officers who lived there and moved on were instrumental in slowing speeds. CHP was enforcing speed limit. Maybe CHP could slow traffic along US 6?

Burns recalled Mono did aggressive Specific Plan, looking at higher density to create visual slow-down image. Specific Plan was not supported, developer long gone. Land ownership pattern limits opportunities.

Johnston wondered if Complete Streets concepts could factor into this study. Green stated it's primarily pedestrians, bikes, sidewalks, safe routes to school. Complete Streets is something along those lines.

Alcala added that shoulder widening is closest got in this area.

C. Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information: Alcala mentioned 1) multi-agency draft Sustainable Freight Action Plan (electric-charging, bridges, truck parking, cross-jurisdictional information sharing), comments by July 16; 2) May is bike month, with May 20 National Bike-to-Work Day; and 3) CA Bike/Pedestrian plan. Someone will speak on this multi-modal plan June 2 at Bishop office.

8. INFORMATIONAL

A. Transportation Funding Update (CSAC): Johnston cited controversies on taxes. Increase registration fees? Diesel tax on trucks? Tap into cap/trade funds. Restore funding to appropriate levels. Green and Higerd have information.

B. Rep. Bigelow letter: Le Francois countered comment about "CTC taking away funding." CTC does not set, just allocates funding. Cannot allocate more than money coming in. Bigelow let the matter go, responsible for screwing it up. Cheap shot trying to blame CTC. Supervisor Stacy Corless will meet with Bigelow, Johnston might attend.

Holler noted funds to allocate are short, just scarce resources.

Hogan thought it fortunate that Rep. Bigelow sits on transportation commissions, acknowledges Mono.

C. Deer Mortality letter: Caltrans will revisit issue in July or August.

9. **UPCOMING AGENDA:** 1) Oregon's road charge program: Broaden to California. Under-represented by rurals. Green will send information to distribute; 2) LTF allocation; and 3) Mono staffing to deal with OWP.

10. **ADJOURN** at 11:51 a.m. to June 13, 2016

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary