

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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MINUTES

June 11, 2018
(Adopted August 13, 2018)

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Fred Stump, Stacy Corless (teleconference). ABSENT: John Peters
TOWN COMMISSIONERS: Sandy Hogan, John Wentworth, Shields Richardson
COUNTY STAFF: Gerry Le Francois, Wendy Sugimura, Michael Draper, Megan Mahaffey, Garrett Higerd, CD Ritter
TOWN STAFF: Haislip Hayes
CALTRANS: Brent Green, Ryan Dermody, Austin West
ESTA: Karie Bentley
YARTS: Artis L. Smith, Selena McKinney

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. MINUTES

MOTION: Approve minutes of May 14, 2018, as amended: Item 5, next-to-last line: **Request Commissioner Wentworth** take to DC; item 6B.2, second line: New **USFS-person forest supervisor**; item 8B, next-to-last line: higher **service hour percentage than some most** counties (roll-call vote: Hogan/Stump. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.)

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Stump:** Crowley Lake skate park opens tomorrow, paving in July. **Richardson:** None. **Hogan:** Thanks to Caltrans for bulletins. **Wentworth:** Attended e-bike demo with Brent Green, big deal in Mammoth. Unique opportunity to flatten geography for commuting. MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) obtained permission to allow e-bikes within USFS permit area. Town working closely, leveraging resources on bike interface. Federal government does not allow on soft-surface trails, but OK to ride in ski area. Paved paths legitimate soon. MMSA is first ski area in country to do this. Walk/Bike/Ride and mobility committee meet tomorrow. Richardson rode his today. Work with Caltrans on 203. Prop 69 passed, also 68. Preview of November on SB1. **Corless:** Old Mammoth has limited service. MCWD would not approve use of its site for bus turnaround. Proposal won't go any further. Find sustainable long-term solution.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Adopt Resolution R18-04:** Michael Draper noted deficiencies found last month, so edited matrix to include additional requests. Nothing was added to resolution.

Stump wanted to clarify SSTAC as making request – Social Services Transportation Advisory Council. Last year Antelope Valley community wanted to add fifth-day DAR (Dial.A.Ride). Continuing? Yes.

June Lake shuttle from winter or last summer? Sugimura noted ridership not meeting 10% fare box. Helm had recommended getting established. Supervisor Gardner wanted match from community. Under way. LTC has option to allocate funds as well.

Bentley stated June Lake shuttle began July 1 last year. Met with operations supervisor John Robertson and Bob Gardner, who wanted weekday service June 30 through mid-August, weekends till Jam Fest. Community wanted DAR service. Phone on bus to pick up. Lunch break 1-2. DAR is new this year. Driver must pull off to answer phone.

Hogan thought one year not long enough. If people see bus, that's good. MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) funded winter service.

Sugimura cited steps: unmet needs, reasonable to meet. June Lake shuttle did not meet farebox. Analysis based on criteria. Can still choose to fund it.

COMMISSIONERS

Stacy Corless Sandy Hogan John Peters Shields Richardson Fred Stump John Wentworth

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R18-04 making findings that there are unmet transit needs, and the needs are not reasonable to meet. (*Richardson Hogan. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.*)

6. ADMINISTRATION

A. ESTA (Eastern Sierra Transit Authority): Gerry Le Francois introduced ESTA Acting Executive Director Karie Bentley, who thanked everyone for being welcoming and helpful. After John Helm retired May 21, both recruitments failed, so she was appointed acting. Board is in contact with member entities, reaching out. After 15 years Jill Batchelder moved on to Caltrans in March, David Leonin left end of February, leading to 75% turnover in three months. Two admin specialist positions filled. Happy with current team, appreciate support and understanding. Bentley was hired 1.5 year ago after 25 years in charge of day-to-day operations at private Rousek Toy Co.

Hogan noted that Bentley inherited well-oiled, complex machine that's been extremely successful over the years.

Recruitment deadline? *Interim solution for transit-knowledgeable, recruiting firm. Operations still strong, short of staff in Mammoth for summer.*

Le Francois introduced Artis Smith from Merced/YARTS and Selena McKinney from LSC Transportation Consultants.

B. TDA (Transportation Development Act) allocations: Megan Mahaffey explained that TDA was established in 1971, codes/regulations. Unmet needs process does not equate to how to allocate funds.

C. 1. Resolution R18-05 LTF (Local Transportation Fund): The LTF totals 0.25% of sales tax. \$100,000 over budget, so excess funds to distribute as shown in resolution. Walker and June Lake are included. Mahaffey stated reserve last year was used for Walker.

Rollover? *Will have whatever's left over. Additional \$15,000 into reserve. Allocating funds for next year today. Pulling across 10 years for rolling average. Conservative when economy is high.*

How surplus funds allocated? *If within governing plan of RTP and meets transit, probably cover it.*

If economy still strong, maybe get priorities from LTC? *The LTC can weigh in on what it wants funded. Some money to work with, some unmet needs not costly.*

Hogan reminded that reserve started pilot programs.

Stump questioned school bus service. Possible for ESTA to fill in? ESUSD (Eastern Sierra Unified School District) will not transport Benton Paiute kids to school, so maybe from Edna Beaman to Chalfant to be picked up by ESTA. Subsequent issue of Bishop transit. Kids are gone from 6:45 am to 4:30 pm. Helm spoke with both superintendents. Mahaffey will investigate; maybe reserve could fund that.

McKinney noted public dollars could be used for school routes if public riders are allowed as well.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R18-05 approving apportionment and allocation for the 2018-19 Local Transportation Fund (*Hogan/Richardson. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.*)

2. Resolution R18-06 STA (State Transit Assistance): Megan Mahaffey stated STA is specific to transit. Annual pass-through \$92,000 above last year. 30% to Inyo County out of \$91,394.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R18-06 approving apportionment and allocation for State Transit Assistance 2018-19 fiscal year. (*Corless/Stump. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.*)

7. TRANSIT

A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA):

1. Resolution R18-07 (5311): Karie Bentley described operations funding.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R18-07 approving & authorizing submission of 2019 Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 apportionment grant with Eastern Sierra Transit Authority as the subrecipient of \$81,358 and authorize executive director to sign all required certifications and assurances. (*Richardson/Hogan. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.*)

2. Resolution R18-08 (5311(f)): Karie Bentley noted Lone Pine to Reno, Mammoth to Lancaster funding that was not competitive now is. Split projects into two routes. If toll credits available for project not need matching funds. Kern pays portion, balance split by Mono and Inyo.

Toll credits? Ryan Dermody stated that Title 23 of the United States Code permits states to substitute certain previous toll-financed investments for state matching funds on current federal-aid projects. Toll credits are earned when the State, a toll authority, or a private entity funds a capital transportation investment with toll revenues earned on existing toll facilities. Bentley recalled ESTA had unclear understanding of toll credits.

Le Francois noted Rock Creek rehab used toll credits instead of RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program) funds. Dermody stated highways and bridges collect tolls, fed should have paid, but toll credits were issued instead.

Who makes decision on toll credits? Le Francois recalled Caltrans headquarters determined what got toll credits.

Why not competitive last year? Bentley stated allowing new, not just continuing, applications. Scoring sections, new applications. Chance could not be funded. Match money would not fund whole route. If not get funding, will be talking.

Did Inyo act already? Yes.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution R18-08 approving & authorizing executive director to sign all required certifications and assurances for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) grant application for operating assistance for the 395 intercity bus routes. (*Hogan/Richardson. Ayes: 5-0. Absent: Peters.*)

--- Break: 10:15-10:20 ---

B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

1. **Short-Range Transit Plan:** Artis Smith at Merced/YARTS for six months. YARTS is a different creature, funding could run out by next year. Short-Range Transit Plan is required, so hired **Gordon Shaw, LSC consultant, represented by Selena McKinney, LSC consultant.** Review service, strengths/weaknesses, public stakeholder interviews. Fourth public forum, 80 in Yosemite Valley, Merced, Mariposa. Business plan to guide system five to seven years. Potential route/schedule changes. Originally JPA (Joint Powers Authority) was NPS, Merced, Mariposa, and Mono. Collecting data. Ridership increase 40% over 10 years. Expansion to Fresno and Sonora. Need new vehicles, contracting some now. Worldwide online reservations helpful.

Stump noted 2017 figures show increase. Factor in heavy winter for Hwy 120? Hogan mentioned fires also. McKinney confirmed fires, floods, landslides, and heavy snows affect service planning. Stump wanted to know if reserve funding ~~to~~ could handle such factors.

McKinney stated East Side service varies from 3,555 to 6,740 riders. June Lake loop gets low ridership. Maybe if gets used to public transit with ESTA, use YARTS more. Mammoth to Tuolumne Meadows ridership was low, so dropped and replaced by two full round trips/day to Valley. Visitation is increasing in shoulder seasons, need more service then. Look at Mono County changes as well as technology. People stand long distances or get stranded in Valley. Expansion of summer schedules. Working Paper 1: Existing conditions. Paper 2: Alternatives analysis. Adopt final plan by end of 2018.

Stakeholders on East Side? Hogan suggested June Lake CAC and Mono Basin RPAC. McKinney noted June Mountain Ski Area and Rush Creek only pick up two/day.

Hogan noted Mono Basin visitor center serves as park & ride.

Season dates? McKinney replied pass opening through September.

Hogan indicated NPS holds up opening, not Caltrans. Item of controversy. Pass is Lee Vining's lifeline.

Brent Green stated NPS pays for Merced route, won't talk to Caltrans.

If eliminate loop and pick up at June Lake Junction (SR 158/US 395), how would people get there from Rush Creek trailhead? Linkage could create win/win. Two Lee Vining sites have low ridership, get people to Mobil Mart. Focus on less-used pickup sites.

McKinney indicated basically a value judgment on June Lake. Two people/day?

Who's paying for consultant? Issues go beyond moving people to tourist destinations. Corless sits on YARTS JPA board. Paid by member counties who provided input. Board sets schedule, makes decisions, very concerned about fiscal sustainability. Maybe fare increase, none since 2009. ESTA's fiscal management provides an example. Need good stakeholder input from tourist businesses. Mono and Mammoth Lakes Tourism would have good insight. Interest in regional future of YARTS, alleviate congestion to park, maybe other destinations outside park.

Hogan indicated Jeff Simpson is knowledgeable on gateway communities, wealth of information on marketing.

Corless noted good relationship with Visit CA. See bigger patterns, how impact future of YARTS.

Wentworth wanted data about East Side trips. Factor in open/close of road, fires for accurate comparison. Useful to explore other options.

McKinney cited ridership by hour by route. Marketing person met with locals last week. Interviews with USFS, Amtrak, Caltrans, ESTA, Greyhound, county supervisors, JPA advisory committee. Working papers will get information out for feedback.

Wentworth wanted to understand LTC role with YARTS.

Hogan noted business plan for five to seven years. Bypass at 120 entrance?

No fare increase since 2009? Corless stated it's already in the works.

Hogan cited need for replacement buses. Contract for condo at Village.

Artis Smith reiterated if not look seriously at funding, YARTS will be in trouble. Hogan suggested periodic funding increases. Tuolumne pilot is paid by NPS, Fresno is seasonal. Always feared money could go away. Note: Reservations on East Side almost double already. Stump wanted to look at break point. Gradual better than huge increase. Would ridership collapse? McKinney will look at different fares to find sweet spot. Valley is more crowded.

8. **CALTRANS**

A. **Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Brent Green announced Freeman Gulch-1 ribbon-cutting tomorrow. Three segments left plus Olancho/Cartago, which acquired first parcel. Green attended e-bike meeting. Bike industry in general has been flat for years – 1% of market two years ago, 7% in 2017, higher this year. Biking in 40- to 70-yr-old affluent population shifting to ages 25-35. Green met with District 8 regarding US 395 into San Bernardino County, task force to evaluate corridor efforts. Bring in CHP, 395 communities, eastern Kern.

Stump recalled San Bernardino towns wanted growth, but never addressed how people get around. Huge subdivisions, congestion ratcheted up by more stoplights. Could cities contribute?

Green noted incrementally changing two lanes to four. Developers may not give up right of way.

Nature of interest? Green cited fatalities. Kern all way down. Part engineered two lane follows terrain. Variety of safety improvements, some good, some not. Complex issue. Special interest groups developing websites. Bike month in May was successful, Bishop tour that Austin West masterminded will be repeated. Well received, 25 attendees. One e-biker on tour but didn't turn it on.

Austin West noted architecture input on Intelligent Transportation Design.

Stump noted FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has nationwide cell coverage map that IT director looked at. Breaks down by speed, devices that work, areas covered by only one vendor. Federal document goes only to 4G, not 5G.

9. **INFORMATIONAL:** No items

10. **UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Resolution for Richardson; 2) introduce new commissioner; 3) winter update; 4) if no pressing items, move to August 13

11. **ADJOURN** at 11:27 am to July 9, 2018

Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary