

# Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

October 23, 2017  
(Adopted December 11, 2017)

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:** John Peters, Fred Stump. **ABSENT:** Larry Johnston

**TOWN COMMISSIONERS:** John Wentworth, Sandy Hogan. **ABSENT:** Shields Richardson

**COUNTY STAFF:** Scott Burns, Gerry Le Francois, Michael Draper, Garrett Higerd, CD Ritter

**TOWN STAFF:** Grady Dutton

**CALTRANS:** Brent Green, Austin West, Bryan Winzenread, Haissam Yahya

**ESTA:** Jill Batchelder

**GUEST:** Chris Lizza

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair John Peters called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. at the Town/County Conference Room, Minaret Village Mall, Mammoth Lakes. Attendees recited pledge of allegiance to the flag.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

3. **MINUTES:** Approve minutes as amended:

1) June 12, 2017: Second line above morning break: Wentworth suggested Shady Rest **Park** meeting on **grooming** next winter; & item 6B: **Sydney Cindy** Kelly will take over at Oct. 23 [YARTS] board meeting. (*Stump/Wentworth. Ayes: 3. Abstain due to absence: Hogan. Absent: Johnston & Richardson.*)

2) Sept. 11, 2017: Item 5A, two-thirds down page: Dutton stated Town applied to **reprogram** \$2.6 million for roundabout to **Main Street**; & top line, packet page 3: Hogan thought **rack track** record on MOUs speaks for itself. (*Hogan/Wentworth. Ayes: 4. Absent: Johnston & Richardson.*)

4. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** **Stump:** Damaged shelter removed at Tom's Place. Recycle into greenhouse. Agenda item: Dream Mountain area request culvert clearing ASAP due to runoff that caused flooding. Alice Suzynski. **Hogan:** Road north looks good all way to NV line. **Wentworth:** Commended Town planners for grant application for General Plan update on climate change action plan. To Sacramento Thursday for two minutes public comment. **Peters:** Field trip to Summers Meadows area, new bridge, private landowners appreciative. USFS, all agreed with how emergency access is handled. BOS got pavement management plan, thanked Garrett Higerd and staff for good vision of what to expect in upcoming months and years, importance of SB 1. Weather monitoring in Mammoth Lakes to NWS (National Weather Service): Solution to gaps last season. Visitor center monitoring had big gaps in weather data. Nobody there to record it. **Wentworth:** NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) working with Visitor Center staff, which wants to keep site.

5. **ADMINISTRATION**

A. **2018 RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program) & MOU/Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funding:** Gerry Le Francois provided overview. All deprogramming in 2016, projects off table, money back into STIP shares. 2018 cycle has \$19 million to reprogram. FG (FG) segment 2, contribute Inyo's share, heavily taxed on Olancha/Cartago (O/C). Town may have money from District 9. Proposed \$3 million in Mono's pavement management system. Smaller funds to develop project study reports. Replacement vehicle for ESTA unlikely. New five-year cycle to 2023.

### COMMISSIONERS

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Additional share for O/C? LTC is conservative about programming negative balance. Would come back to us. Many moving pieces in ITIP. Got lots of credit for FG segment 1 construction.

Inyo contributing to ESTA? No potential programming. Really no money, staff recognizes ESTA for service it provides. Money goes into reserve shares.

Stump noted using that money jumps from \$1.78 million closer to \$2 million in black. Le Francois recalled past commissions typically had no desire to go into red. Removes flexibility if project cost increases. Would have to deprogram project.

Stump cited FG segment 1 money allocated. Inyo is asking Mono to contribute to FG segment 2. \$260,000 to keep project creeping forward. O/C always there, \$6.4 million.

Placeholder to protect Town's \$3 million? Le Francois noted staff supported prioritizing project study reports.

No replacement bus? ESTA is always looking for grants.

Backfill broken-down bus with remaining STIP shares? Public transit component of STIP. Will ask that.

Winzenread noted positive comments on CTC workshop, understood great partnerships make things happen. Inyo and Mono to FG segment 1 resonated, showed corridor as priority. New cycle: O/C was huge hit. Inyo savings went away. Next cycle Inyo \$31 million, going \$20 million in red. CTC staff working with them, letting it occur. Future burden on Inyo. Partnerships: Looking for avenues to fund projects. New fund solidified \$1.25 million for \$3 million need of Town. Free up money to help O/C. Support from CTC, next cycle \$56 million to O/C, \$67 million total. Pay FG money back to make whole what Inyo and Mono sent south. ITIP funding through governor's office coming in. Anything to help Inyo appreciated. Projects in other areas going out in this cycle, next STIP cycle looks even better.

Kern COG contribute to FG segment 2? Winzenread stated no capacity, so Inyo and Mono stepped up for 30% + 30%. As program FG segment 2, back to 40/40/10/10. Back to O/C, 10%.

\$20 million in red for Inyo adjusted next cycle? Hope for good cycle, take Inyo more than one to make up deficit. CTC acknowledged Inyo has another project to program with FLAP grant, added \$1 million to that. Even 10% share balance would go into red.

Peters stated SB 1 positively impacts road system. LTC agree to add contribution? Winzenread noted conversation starting.

Wentworth wanted to formalize information from individual staffs. Who keeps track of shares moving around? Winzenread cited CTC.

\$1.25 million savings to Town included? Winzenread cited \$3 million as Town's need. ATP funds through screening, project accepted. Doing financial contribution to transfer funds into Town's program.

Free up \$1.25 million for Inyo? Winzenread stated partnerships give opportunity to free up money for O/C. Jumped on that and got it.

Stump was willing to consider releasing extra shares, not go into red. Roads in Antelope Valley alone cost over \$11 million, other roads need work. Likes \$3 million contribution into preventive maintenance.

Wentworth requested staff put together specifics and options by Dec. 11 meeting.

Hogan would feel more comfortable if Town contributed \$2.5 million.

No local projects for Inyo? Winzenread stated Inyo's contribution to corridor means no needs addressed. Visitation to Eastern Sierra huge this summer.

Peters cited commitment to MOU and partnering with Inyo. What does it mean for local/regional Mono needs? Next chunk from ITIP?

Winzenread noted more contributions in future at 40% commitment. Big statement by CTC putting back this much money in one cycle. Both counties committed to MOUs. Want to consider Town and Mono needs.

Peters was not adamant against going into red if more comes in during next cycle.

Stump recalled Mono lucky to survive what was promised 2014, pulled 2016. Public polls say SB 1 not favored now, but hesitant for Mono. Inyo does not have climatic conditions of Mono, ~~no~~ although it does have several communities that have state highways as main streets. Open to consider, but cautious based on history. More money promised in 2016 went away.

Winzenread noted STIP has good and bad years. SB 1 provides funding for projects, shared concerns. SB 1 corrected revenue stream. Le Francois will lay it all out at December meeting.

Higerd mentioned BOS report on pavement management system. Updated data collection for complete snapshot on as many roads as possible every two years to inform LTC on STIP cycles. SB 1 coming in, significant change provides enough funding to create different situation. Preparing five-year capital road improvement. \$19 million in projects, SB 1 about 50%. Other funding sources other 50%. Ask for recommendation on scope of funds. \$1 million toward maintenance project in 2014. \$3 million project in 2018 STIP. Lots of other projects peppered throughout Mono. Strategy: Maintain streets invested in, also hit those degraded with highest impact.

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Town and County working together, discussing shared position with USFS issues? Higerd confirmed sharing notes with Town. Projects in five-year cycle similar. Pavement management system more cost-prohibitive to get cost data. Agreements with Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe, annual review of maintenance priorities not occur this year. Follow through, move to front burner. Sustained damage on dirt roads, especially on Humboldt/Toiyabe. FEMA funding to fix. Higerd mentioned 500 miles of roads to maintain Stump requested analysis of 500 miles of dirt roads on USFS land. Maybe do 300 miles.

Dutton mentioned Town shares information. Pavement management systems differ. CTC feedback. Not same atmosphere, spirit of cooperation in Dist 8 and 10. Credit to all here for 20-year commitment. Town not taken action, maybe Measure U funding. Submitted project list. New development staff to implement SB 1. Sustainable communities grant submitted last week, lots of hours spent.

B. **SB 1 status** (*verbal update by Town and County public works at December meeting*)

--- Break: 10:09-10:15 am ---

## 6. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

A. **Winter debrief:** Le Francois developed questionnaire on what went right, what didn't, how to prepare for severe winter events. Outreach to FPDs (Fire Protection Districts): raise questions; understand evaluation; and plan for future. Potential funding source, as districts volunteer. Edison scheduled as well as paramedics, special districts. Talked with Mono public works, prior director available for input.

Email addressing staffing, vacancies? Stump suggested entity resource sharing, check legal restrictions on moving equipment around. Examine sharing resources, including people. If Town gets hit hard, maybe flood issues elsewhere. Understand everyone completely buried, but look at potential agreements that protect entities legally, but allow [cooperation]. National Guard was here, but took time. Avalanche took out main power supply to town. Mono mobilized equipment from Lee Vining/June Lake area. Public purpose was making sure town had power and still maintained redundant circuit.

Hogan wanted to include USFS equipment and crews. MMSA (Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) also, even though not public agency. Agency heads still meet? SCE, school district. Spread broad net.

Green noted Caltrans is looking at assisting. Stump wanted to avoid formal agreements needing approval of regional or state office.

Wentworth thought community housing lurked behind everything. How can Town and Mono work together? MMSA funding study. YNP (Yosemite National Park) housing issues as well.

Peters suggested winter debrief in interagency setting for formal contributions from different partners with housing as part of issue. Le Francois recalled nobody talked about housing.

Wentworth noted carbon issues. Climate change is top consideration. He noted Caltrans attended Town workshop last week on parking.

Questionnaire out now. Enough time? Peters cited leadership change at LADWP, avalanche forecasting. Critical to how approach next winter on lessons learned. Get entity representatives to participate, at least through questionnaire. Le Francois suggested CPT (Collaborative Planning Team).

Peters mentioned work on MOUs to meet critical needs for public safety when MMSA opens.

Green stated all Caltrans districts prepare winter operations plan. District 9 is talking about staffing. Better shape this year, ahead of last year – up seven, only one vacancy. Staff for 100% normal.

Equipment to match number of people? *Yes. Critically analyzed equipment last year, due back and beefed up by Dec. 15. Parking/snow management meeting last week. Snow removal strategy different from Town's. Not use snowblower for small amount of snow. Mix of equipment and strategy. Snowcats have specific purpose. Used three to four wk/yr, not four-season basis. Maybe Mono and Caltrans help NPS, as MMSA is helping Caltrans. Met with traffic management plan.*

Who decides on closures? *Work with CHP. Experienced team on traffic management, not maintenance crew. Every year meet with multi-agency group. Winter debrief: Agencies communicating. Boots on ground people have known each other decades, but all way to management level, the press. Mutual aid agreement to close gaps: Caltrans and Mono in position to help. Caltrans looks globally.*

Wentworth noted Town is working with Bend, OR, on communications. Authoritative sources putting out same information. Maybe Caltrans meeting Nov. 6 for consistent information?

Peters appreciated Caltrans' communication on intermittent pass closure and reopening. If hard closure, let public know. Who are critical communicators, how to channel. No Mono clearinghouse to get information out. Need to know where to look.

Wentworth saw components of good communication coming together. Get basic outline on how to do things, get on same page. Peters recalled contradictory information on Slinkard Fire this summer.

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Green described Caltrans process: 10 days out, five days out, two days out, look out window. If significant event occurs on Mono passes, send press release. Dependent on elevation. Goes into statewide database within 10 minutes. Dispatchers at CHP in constant communication.

B. **Walk/Bike/Ride:** John Wentworth: cited two grant apps in. talking to State about how to combine with climate change issues, working group at Town.

C. **Tioga Pass opening:** Stump questioned staff report referencing Chris Lizza as planning commissioner. Burns cited honest mistake when someone wears lots of hats.

Tioga Pass is trans-Sierra highway, not just route to Yosemite.

Hogan recalled a committee a few years ago. Conversations fine, but no documentation. She thought NPS views Tioga as its road.

Wentworth mentioned regional ecosystem meeting. Chip Jenkins shared priorities for NPS, including housing, transit and overcrowding.

Hogan wanted to focus specifically on winter opening. Keep pushing, as Eastern Sierra depends on it. NPS wants to be careful, cautious.

Wentworth wanted to add housing on East Side.

Chris Lizza, recreationist/business owner, found advance notice helpful. Lot of ideas last month. Agendize NPS issues. Lot of snow, dense, numerous avalanches. Park personnel opened top gate. Not open if snow at summit, red flag. Open to gate to facilitate recreation corridor as early as possible. Only one crew removed snow from roadway, parking areas, prepared guardrail, scaling crew on rockfall. Need snow removal plus maintenance. Maybe Caltrans does not have capacity, and MMSA could help. Talked to MMSA last week, willing/able, has some informal agreements with NPS that allow work. Send representative to upcoming meeting. Park unable to hire private contractor, as stated? Not so. Issue was accepting donated services from private contractors.

Wentworth saw key recreation, financial, economic incentives. Who owns this thing?

Hogan thought some years tough, other have best skiing around. Getting to gate is big deal.

--- Break: 11:05 am. Saw people in BP, contacted, no new LTC people there. ---

Green stated guardrail on Tioga is different. Part of SB 1 provides funding to hire District 9 crew designated only for guardrail. Resources to do it, not bring from elsewhere. Bridge rail on green bridge damaged, awaited crew to fix. Can't do everything simultaneously.

Peters thanked Caltrans for field trip at Tioga during limited hours/day until hill became unstable. Daily schedule instead of four days? Provide institutional knowledge to new crews. Channeling runoff, building berms. Visit SR 108 as well. Maybe MOU with Mono or MMSA. Look at all opportunities. Green indicated Caltrans will continue to look at MMSA. Long-time managers and supervisors have institutional knowledge.

Peters saw worker safety first/foremost. Never "at all costs" proposal.

Lizza cited Tioga as issue at Mono Basin RPAC. Request snowcat from another district, lease equipment and operators. Pisten-Bully is designed to remove snow. Bring in MMSA operators.

Green mentioned few snowcats around state. Valid point of having snowcat when it's best tool. Peters suggested inviting MMSA's Clifford Mann to table.

## 7. TRANSIT

### A. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)

1. **July to September operating statistics:** Jill Batchelder touted abundance of trips for county population. Passenger trips/hour down. Farebox ratio except rural routes very strong, exceeded State's 10%. Ridership down in summer, late opening of Reds Meadow July 24.

Hogan asked why trolley and Purple Line were down, when fare is free. *Visitation down early summer, hikers to Pacific Northwest, back late August.*

Why Reno and Lancaster down? *Backcountry hikers on PCT.*

Fares? *Reds Meadow. Contract with USFS. Not operating, no expenses associated.*

Stump cited ongoing town discussion on Gray Line. *ESTA actively discussing adequate, safe turnaround site. ESTA would like to provide that transit.*

Who's taking lead on turnaround? *Helm working with Holler and Town public works.*

Hogan recalled problem was solved earlier. Why larger bus? *Trolley route modified to cover areas of Gray Line except one segment. Why not old vehicle, old schedule? Budgeting issues.* Hogan noted it was voted on years ago. Contract issue. TOT supposed to help. Peters suggested revisiting issue.

Stump asked location of bus shelter at McDonalds. *New stop in Vons parking lot, but no shelter.*

Ritter, who rides public transit, indicated bus shelter at McDonald's was removed long ago, whereabouts unknown.

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**B. Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS):** Michael Draper reported record reservations at YARTS, 3,000 for SR 120. Gained \$149,988 revenue. Reservations account for 50% of seats, walk-on still possible. Second bus from Mammoth Lakes to Valley supported by Merced River Plan and NPS. Departures at 6:30 and 8 am. STA-eligible transit operator. Receive 5311 funding. Shifting allocation of funds. Tioga closed for overnight parking, campgrounds closed. YARTS ~~founder~~ **founding manager** Dick Whittington is retiring Nov. 1, huge encyclopedia of info, party this Friday. Cindy Kelly will take over full time.

**8. CALTRANS**

**A. California's Critical Urban/Rural Freight Corridor Designation Process:** Austin West looked at designation as extension of national freight network, temporary design to turn on/off as needed. Nominate specific sections/corridors for projects. Apply for grants to accomplish freight goals. Sent to Stump. Wanted letter of support designating post miles for projects so Caltrans could follow through. Project should be shovel ready. Inyo has designated O/C as critical freight corridor. MOU, reflects well. LTC requested to consider letter of support for O/C.

Stump stated Inyo LTC already wrote two letters: O/C and US 395/6. Tesla plant is reason alone for this. Green cited freight as huge component, so beef up argument to get money.

**MOTION:** Staff to draft letter, authorize chair to sign or SB supporting designation of freight corridor (Stump/Hogan. Ayes: 4. Absent: Richardson & Johnston.)

**B. Activities in Mono County & pertinent statewide information:** Brent Green commended town hall with CTC Sept. 13, gave Hogan shout-out on history. Update on Mono meeting. SB 1 plays into STIP – brings excise tax back to historic level, indexes to inflation. O/C: Inyo and Mono can help fill gap of money going elsewhere.

Peters thanked Caltrans staff for ongoing communication throughout the year.

**9. INFORMATIONAL,**

**A. California Transportation Commission letter:** Nice to get recognition of great event. Hogan thought presentations came together well.

Stump cited Susan Bransen's willingness to look at specific issues. Has info from NDOT (Nevada Department of Transportation) on 50/80 south. CTC came to be engaged, impressive. Le Francois deserved mention in letter.

Le Francois commended Town staff, MMSA, and Richardson for refreshments..

**10. UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS:** 1) Letter on freight corridor; 2) quarterly reports; 3) RTP amendment; 4) Yosemite feedback from Supervisor Bob Gardner; and 5) Gray Line report. Cancellation notice for Nov. 13.

**11. ADJOURN** at 11:51 am to December 11 meeting

*Prepared by CD Ritter, LTC secretary*

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