



**INYO COUNTY  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Ted Pedersen, Executive Director

**MINUTES**

**INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
Inyo County Board of Supervisors Room  
224 N. Edwards St, Independence, CA 93526**

Chairman Bob Kimball opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

ITEM NO. 1 Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Bob Kimball  
Beverly Brown  
Susan Cullen  
Richard Cervantes (alternate)  
Doug Thompson  
Bruce Dishion

Others Present:

Beth Himelhoch, IMAH  
Bob Ennis, Carson & Colorado Rwy  
Rick Franz, Caltrans  
Forest Becket, Caltrans  
Tom Meyers, Caltrans  
David Grah, City of Bishop  
Jane McDonald, IMACA  
Seth Roberts, Bishop Paiute Tribe  
Cedrik Zemitis, Caltrans  
Jill Batchelder, ESTA  
Courtney Smith, Inyo County  
Linda Baffrey, Secretary

ITEM NO. 2 Public Comment

None

**ACTION ITEMS**

ITEM NO. 3 Request Commission approve minutes of March 17, 2010  
Susan Cullen moved to approve the minutes of March 17, 2010. Beverly Brown  
seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

ITEM NO. 4 Request Commission approve Third Quarter RPA Invoice

Courtney Smith explained that \$216,000 of Rural Planning Assistance funds was allocated to the LTC by the FY 09/10 Overall Work Program Agreement. He said that at the end of the third quarter, the funds are about 73% expended, and he expects the remainder of the funds to be expended by the end of the fiscal year.

Beverly Brown moved to approve the third quarter RPA invoice. Susan Cullen seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

ITEM NO. 5 Request Commission approve the audit report for the year ending 2009

Courtney Smith reported that this is an annual financial audit. He noted that last year, the auditor had recommended a new budget unit be set up for PTMISEA funds, and this has been done.

Bruce Dishion moved to approve the audit report for the year ending 2009. Beverly Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

ITEM NO. 6 Request Commission authorize the Executive Director to sign Certification and Assurances for FTA Section 5311 apportionment funds in the amount of \$73,879 for the operation of transit services in Inyo County.

Jill Batchelder explained that Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 funds are apportioned annually to each county to be used only for public transportation projects in non-urbanized areas. \$73,879 was programmed at the February, 2010 LTC meeting. The Executive Director's signature is required on the Certifications and Assurances form in order for ESTA to apply for these funds. Ms Batchelder explained that this money could be used for a number of things, while certain other types of funding are only for capital. Susan Cullen asked if this money is received each year, and if it is always the same amount. Ms Batchelder said that it is received each year, but the amount varies between \$72,000 and \$80,000.

Beverly Brown asked if it would be used for general operations, and Ms Batchelder said it would. She said that Mono County also receives this funding, and their apportionment this year was approximately \$53,000.

Beverly Brown moved to authorize the Executive Director to sign Certification and Assurances for FTA Section 5311 apportionment funds in the amount of \$73,879 for the operation of transit services in Inyo County. Susan Cullen seconded the motion.

Motion carried 6-0.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

ITEM NO. 7 Unmet Transit Needs Workshop and presentation of the minutes of the Social Services Transit Advisory Committee

Bob Kimball opened the Unmet Transit Needs Workshop and explained the unmet needs process. He stated that the LTC would conduct a “hearing” in May in order to meet legal requirements. The minutes from the February Social Services Transit Advisory Council would be accepted as testimony. He explained that staff would look at requests presented to determine if they meet the definition of an unmet transit need and are reasonable to meet, and noted that there can be no duplication of services, either public or private.

Courtney Smith added that all Transportation Development Act funds are allocated to transit. The “findings” will be presented to the Commission for adoption at the June meeting. He noted that while TDA revenues have leveled off, that ESTA has been very good at making adjustments in routes to address transit needs.

Jane McDonald thanked the Commission for scheduling a hearing. She read a letter from Selma Calnan, which reiterated her testimony to the Social Services Transit Advisory Council meeting. Her letter noted that in Inyo County there are 3000 people age 60 to 75, 1300 people age 76 to 85, and 500 people over the age of 86. She noted that senior bus trips for social events are no longer available from ESTA, and much of the service for the elderly is now geared toward the disabled instead.

Seth Roberts, Public Works Director for the Paiute Tribe said that there is a need among tribal members for rides to the Toiyabe Health Center, and to Reno for medical appointments. He stated that there is federal money available to tribes, but they must work in cooperation with a transportation agency.

Richard Cervantes commented that the layover in Ridgecrest might be too short for medical appointments and shopping. He suggested the possibility of running two buses. He noted that there has been a huge expansion on the navy base, and there will be a large increase with the advent of the solar project on the Owens Lake. He said there are 65 employees working at the facility by Keeler, and it might be wise to have a bus go around the lake to pick up workers in Lone Pine, Olancho, Keeler, and Cartago.

Beverly Brown commented that buses are picking up patrons from the local bars, while services to seniors are being cut. She said she feels that the seniors should be taken care of first. She asked how much money is brought in from the bar transportation, and asked if there is bus service to Mule Days events, and to Manzanar.

Bob Kimball noted that the commission could look into the various routes, and how they are performing. Perhaps some of the money could be used more effectively elsewhere. He said the commission needs to work closely with ESTA, and commented that he would like to see the return of the monthly reports with the information broken down by routes.

Susan Cullen asked if 5311 funds could be used for charters. Ms Batchelder said they can, but that there are very strict federal regulations. ESTA must contact all 139 transit providers on the federal register. These providers have 48 – 72 hours in which to reply. If any one of them expresses interest, ESTA cannot do it. She said the penalty for not following these regulations is the loss of all federal funding. Private charters cost \$350 for the first four hours, and \$80 for each hour thereafter. She also noted that 5310 groups, which are comprised of seniors, low income, or youth could arrange charters at the rate of \$80 per hour, and \$25 per hour for “dead time”.

Bruce Dishion asked how late the fixed route buses run in Bishop, and Ms Batchelder said they run until 6 p.m. She noted that Dial-a-Ride is available Monday – Thursday from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Friday, from 7 a.m. until 1 a.m., and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. until 2 a.m. She said that as a result of the unmet needs process, they now operate on Sunday from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Bob Ennis said he owns and operates the Mt. Whitney Shuttle Service. He noted that the name would be changed to Eastern Sierra Shuttle Service. He provides rides to all trail heads in the area. He said he had purchased some used buses to use for charter service for the community, but has found the insurance to be very expensive, with payment being required a year in advance. He intends to write to the Department of Insurance and the Public Utilities Commission about the difficulty this causes for charter operators in rural areas. In the summer he plans to offer charter trips to groups, using ESTA's old red route bus.

Doug Thompson thanked those who presented their transportation issues, and told them not to "give up". He noted that the LTC authorizes funds, but has little involvement in routes.

Forest Becket stated that the Forest Services has conducted planning studies in regards to trailheads, and has funding available.

Bob Kimball directed staff to schedule a presentation by the Forest Service on a future agenda.

Mr. Kimball thanked everyone for his or her comments, and noted that the next meeting will be on May 19 in Bishop. This meeting will include an Unmet Transit Needs Hearing.

#### ITEM NO. 8 Discussion of the Eastern Sierra Corridor Enhancement Program

Courtney Smith said that work on the Eastern Sierra Corridor Enhancement book was contracted out by Kern COG. He said it contains potential ideas for improvements on the 395 Corridor. He suggested trying to implement at least one proposal for each community.

Richard Cervantes said he is a member of the Inter-agency Visitor Center Board. He noted that he advocates hydro-seeding of wild flowers along the highway leading into all the communities, and beautiful signage to attract people to the towns. He also commented on all the native flowers that are blooming right now on both sides of Independence.

Forest Becket commented that sometimes grant-funded projects sometimes come through studies such as this one. He said Caltrans is willing to meet the communities half way. Mr. Kimball asked Mr. Becket to keep the commission apprised of any funding that might be available to implement these plans.

Courtney Smith noted that this document can be accessed from the LTC website. He said that color copies are quite expensive, but black and white copies could be obtained.

Doug Thompson commented that he hopes this book doesn't "sit on the shelf". He said he appreciates the list of funding sources that is included, and that we need to study the report to see what can be done.

Courtney Smith stated that Inyo County had chosen not to pursue the scenic byway designation because of all the restrictions involved. Forest Becket noted that federal restrictions are not as strict as the state's.

#### ITEM NO. 9 Introduction of the Draft Overall Work Program for FY 2010/2011.

The draft OWP was presented to the Commission for their consideration / comments. Staff must receive any comments before May 29. Final adoption will be sought at the June meeting. Work completed during the past fiscal year include the development of the Pavement Management Program for City and County, the submittal of the 2010 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, implementation of programming of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and completion of the Eastern Sierra Highway 395 Corridor Enhancement Plan. (Several of the tasks in the 10/11 OWP may tie into this plan.) The tasks listed in the OWP are primarily related to RPA funds, even though PPM and LTF funding are also shown in the OWP.

This year, the purchase of a GPS unit and base station is planned for use by the City and the County at a cost of approximately \$90,000. Other potential significant tasks for the upcoming year include an update of Bishop's General Plan Circulation and Land Use Elements, at an estimated cost of \$110,000, and a parking study for Lone Pine. An additional project that is not in the draft but that staff proposes to add is a study of the ownership of abandoned railroad rights of way, in conjunction with Kern COG.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### ITEM NO. 10 ESTA Report

Jill Batchelder reported that The Forest Service, Transit and Parks have received a \$1.6 million for the purchase of vehicles for Reds Meadow. She said the process would take about two years. ESTA showed a profit on this route last year.

She reported that ridership on most routes is up slightly, although the CREST north route is down. She said the spring Roll-Back is doing well. Bob Kimball commented that the plane fare from Mammoth Airport to LAX is \$79. Jill said that hadn't affected CREST as much as the Mammoth to Reno flights.

#### ITEM NO. 11 Tribal Report

Seth Roberts reported that the tribe is still waiting for the BIA to release funding for their road projects. The right of way still needs to be recorded.

He said they had received \$60,000 for bus shelters on the reservation. The locations will be coordinated with ESTA.

They will also receive ARRA funds for a wetland area on the reservation where they will have trails, board walks and a pond for pupfish. There will be a trail from the wetland area to the Cultural Center.

ITEM NO. 12 Caltrans Report

Quarterly Report

Forest Becket announced a call for projects for the State Safe Routes to School Projects.

He noted that these are projects to improve safety and access to schools, and educational programs. There is less money available this cycle (a half million dollars instead of one million dollars). The deadline for submittal is July 15. Some projects, such as for traffic beacons, must be submitted early to allow time for warrant studies. He said the program focuses on successes, such as sidewalk gap closures.

Tom Meyers reported that the Independence / Manzanar four-lane project is off winter suspension, and should be finished mid-June.

The Black Rock four-lane project is complete, and is up for a Tranny Award.

The Father Crowley Viewpoint is a paved pullout. The National Park Service has purchased restrooms for the site. The viewpoint will be closed for 6-8 weeks during work.

The Sand Dunes parking area is complete, and will belong to the park service.

Coso Rest Area re-opened 2 weeks ago.

The project initiation document is being done for the Joshua Tree Drainage. This will consist of interpretive displays in turn-outs. The project may be delayed for a year.

Sidewalks along Highway 168 from Barlow Lane to the Department of Motor Vehicles is in the 2010 STIP.

The Dusty Lane turn-out at Fort Independence has been approved.

Cedrik Zemitis reported that work is being done on the draft environmental document for the Olancha/Cartago Four-Lane. Public review will occur in the next few weeks, with a choice of alternative being made in late summer. Flyers and surveys will be distributed to gather input from residents and travelers. The survey may also be accessed online at [www.4lane395.com](http://www.4lane395.com). Funding is available through the design phase, but construction funding remains a challenge.

Bob Kimball asked if Caltrans is open to splitting the project. Mr. Zemitis said they would rather do that than wait longer for funding. The cost estimate is \$95 million to \$125 million depending on which alternative is chosen.

The environmental document for Townes Pass is nearing completion, and they will be entering the design phase. This involves moving the road 35 feet away from the rock fall area. This will include a turnout.

The Laws Rehab project is not programmed yet, and the Meadow Farms TE project is not funded yet.

High Point Curve is now a SHOPP safety project.

Forest Becket reported that there would be construction activity north of Independence soon: the tie-in to the four-lane, a turn pocket for Dusty Lane, and improved access to the casino and gas station.

ITEM NO. 13 City of Bishop Report

Dave Grah commented favorably on the new Hwy 395 Four-Lane projects.

He said the Hanby project is ongoing, with water lines being installed in advance of the ARRA pavement reconstruction project. Bids on this project were about \$48,000 higher than anticipated. He is hoping to be able to work with the County. He commented that ARRA is “expensive money” because of the extensive paperwork and reporting requirements.

Project A has been ready for the last year. They are just waiting for money.

Wye Road project will widen and realign the intersection. Environmental work is being done. Next will be public hearings, and then right of way acquisition.

ITEM NO. 14 Executive Director's Report

Courtney Smith reported that he and Ted Pedersen had attended the CTC STIP hearing on March 25. He said the CTC had acknowledged that the RTIP is in compliance. He reported that there will likely be cuts in PTA funds. (buses for ESTA)

ITEM NO. 15 Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

Bob Kimball reported that the ICARE dinner had been very successful. He noted that Ted Pedersen had won the 50/50 drawing, and donated the money back to ICARE.

Richard Cervantes thanked Caltrans for all the projects completed.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Attest:

Ted Pedersen, Executive Director

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by Linda Baffrey, Secretary