



**INYO COUNTY
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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Ted Pedersen, Executive Director

MINUTES

**INYO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
BISHOP CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
377 W. LINE ST., BISHOP, CA 93514**

May 19, 2010

Bob Kimball called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ITEM NO. 1 Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Bob Kimball
Doug Thompson
Susan Cullen
Beverly Brown
Marty Fortney
Bruce Dishion

Others Present:

Roger Rasche, Lone Pine IMAAA Advisory Council
Douglas Cooper, Citizen
Carmen Matson, Citizen
Diane Moore, Bishop Resident
Ole Vegge, Bishop
Selma Calnan, SSTAC Mono County
Beth Himelhoch, IMAH
Jane McDonald, IMACA
Don D. Dunchock
Vernalee Shoffner, Citizen
Betty Stanovich, Bishop Resident
Joan Stathem, Bishop Resident, disabled
Betty Lee Hinga, Bishop Resident, disabled senior
Vivian Adams, Sterling Heights
Clara Armstrong, Sterling Heights
Dolores Wright, Sterling Heights
Laurie Kilgore, Bishop Resident, disabled
Daniel Steinhagen, IMACA
Misti Clark-Holt, Wild Iris
Norberta E. Fullen, Pres.A.M. Lawrence, Democratic Club
Kay Orth, Citizen
Robert Tarin

Debbie Tarin
Jeff Griffiths, City of Bishop
Eileen Peterson, Citizen
Angelina Richardson, Citizen
Brigid Salamon, Disabled advocate
Forest Becket, Caltrans
Brad Mettam, Caltrans
John Helm, ESTA
Jill Batchelder, ESTA
Ted Pedersen, Executive Director
Courtney Smith, Inyo County
Linda Baffrey, Secretary

ITEM NO. 2 Public Comment
None

The Unmet Transit Needs Hearing was opened at this time to accommodate the large number of people in attendance specifically for this item.

ITEM NO. 4 Unmet Transit Needs Hearing

Ole Vegge:

Mr. Vegge said that all of the ESTA bus drivers are very nice. He expressed concern that there are only two bus drivers working on Saturday and Sunday. He feels that one more should be added for each day. He also suggested one more each day during the week after school is out.

Betty Hinga:

Ms Hinga asked if there would be a Dial-a-Ride cut. Bob Kimball told her she would need to speak to ESTA regarding this. Ms Hinga went on to say that people on the outer edges of the town depend on this service, and she feels it would be heartless, and cruel to take it away. She said there are many poor and disabled seniors in this area.

Laurie Kilgore:

Ms Kilgore stated that she uses Dial-a-Ride constantly. The drivers are kind, and they work hard. She said that in a small town, this type of service is needed.

Betty Stanovich:

Ms Stanovich said she lives in the Rocking K area, and needs Dias-a-Ride to go to the senior center everyday, and on Fridays to go to the bank.

Selma Calnan:

Ms Calnan thanked the commission for holding a hearing. She said that the fixed routes are half the cost of Dial-a-Ride, and no reservation is needed, however many elderly can't walk to the bus stop, or stand in bad weather. She then read a prayer about aging. She said that ESTA must "shift gears" from vacationers to the local baby boomer population. She noted that there are occupational stresses on bus drivers. She said that the community must express goals, and the experts must make them work.

Bob Kimball asked how the people in the audience got to the meeting, and most said that they used Dial-a-Ride.

Courtney Smith stated that the LTC administers TDA funds, and explained the unmet needs process, and the concept of “reasonable to meet”. He said there have been no cuts in ESTA’s services that he is aware of. He also said the commission wants to hear concerns about inadequate service.

Norberta Fullin:

Ms Fullin said she had done some research on Dial-a-Ride and had some suggestions to share. She stated that no agency could do it alone; cooperation is needed. She noted that in some other areas, the bus drivers use blackberries and GPS units. She also suggested that ESTA could benefit from hiring a grant writer.

Dolores Garcia Wright:

Ms Wright suggested the expansion of Dial-a-Ride. She said it is not available in the evenings for seniors to go to the movies or other social activities. She also noted that it is too expensive to ride the bus. It costs her \$6.00 to go to the bank, which is a lot for someone on a limited income. She noted that the bus stops are too far from home for someone with groceries to carry, etc. She said that grant money is available, and ESTA needs to work to apply for it. She also mentioned that IMAAA had \$7000 set aside for special trips, and wonders what happened to it.

Brigid Salamon:

Ms Salamon said that transportation after 5 p.m. is needed for the elderly and disabled during the week. She noted that the Friday and Saturday evening routes seem to make money. She suggested the possibility of subsidies from the County to run the buses until 10 p.m. She stated that she is not able to drive anymore, and that is hard for seniors and the disabled to get up early and get ready to catch the bus.

Carmen Matson:

Ms Matson stated that she is on oxygen. She said it sometimes takes her an hour and a half to shop, so sometimes she has to walk home. She asked for an additional driver from 5-6 p.m. Also if she misses the bus after a doctor appointment, she has to walk.

Robert Tarin:

Mr. Tarin said he lives in Rovana. He said his vehicle is broken and with no buses, he has no way to get to town for shopping or doctor appointments. He said neighbors try to help him, but Dial-a-Ride to Rovana is needed.

Joan Stathem:

Ms Stathem said that more drivers are needed, noting that she sometimes has to wait for an hour for a ride. She also asked for evening service during the week for meetings or college classes. She said that she is a disabled senior, and relies on the bus. She noted that the bus was originally set up for seniors.

Douglas Cooper:

Mr. Cooper stated that he had moved to Bishop from Los Angeles 5 months ago, and said it is nice to know that the ESTA bus service is available. He noted that people are asking for more. He feels that they should be thankful for what they have. He also commented that the bus drivers are very friendly.

Roger Rasche:

Mr. Rasche said in regards to “no service to Rovana”, that in Lone Pine, they need only to call a day ahead, and arrangements are made. He said the same is probably true for Rovana.

Diane Moore:

Ms Moore said she wished the hours were later, but is thankful, especially to the lady bus drivers, because they help her with her walker.

Brigid Salamon:

Ms Salamon said she is thankful for the bus service. She said that people live longer because of the chance to get out. She just wants the hours extended. She mentioned that she has a friend who moved to this area because of the bus service. She recommended that people attend ESTA board meetings.

Misti Clark-Holt:

Ms Clark-Holt said she works for Wild Iris, and relies on the bus to get victims out of the area, and out of danger.

Beth Himelhoch: Ms Himelhoch expressed her thanks to ESTA. She said they have provided training to IMAH, and people should call John Helm or Jill Batchelder regarding rumors about service cuts. She noted that people should realize that everyone is short of money right now.

Eileen Peterson:

Ms Peterson stated that she lives in Benton, and because of several back surgeries must go to Bishop for lab work and Hospital visits. She noted that the bus only runs on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. She said that she also goes there for shopping. She has trouble walking, her groceries are heavy, and she must leave by 2:30. She said the bus drivers used to help her with her groceries, but now they only stop on the road. She wants help bringing her groceries into her home. She noted that bus service is costly.

It was noted that the seniors and disabled used to ride for free, but they can't anymore.

Others commented that they use the bus a lot, and appreciate the service.

John Helm of ESTA thanked everyone for attending the hearing, and appreciates his or her input. He also thanked them for their kind words about the staff and drivers. He said there is no plan for reduction of Dial-a-Ride service in Bishop. This was a rumor.

He said there is bus service to Rovana on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but they require that customers call one day ahead.

In response to the remark about service not being free, he said that funding comes from the counties, and also from federal grants. The TDA requires a 10% fare box recovery, so they have to charge. He noted that they do have discounted rates for seniors and the disabled. He reiterated that no cuts in service are planned. In reply to a question about reductions in Benton, he said there are no cuts planned there either. For now, all services will remain status quo, with a review every six months. The ESTA board does a system-wide evaluation of their routes twice a year.

Robert Tarin:

Mr. Tarin said that he wants the bus service to Rovana to be adjusted to later in the day.

Jane McDonald:

Ms McDonald read a card from Juanita Andreas. Ms Andreas said she is grateful for the drivers, but said they tend to drive too fast around corners and over speed bumps. She requested that they reduce their speed.

Daniel Steinhagen:

Mr. Steinhagen thanked the commission for conducting a hearing. He asked why the hearing came about, and what the role is between ESTA and the LTC. He said there has been confusion about this.

He suggested that it would be more appropriate to direct scheduling questions to the ESTA Board. He asked about concerns for future cuts, and what role the LTC plays in this. He encouraged the LTC to join with ESTA in hiring a consultant to define the roles, and instructions from LTC to ESTA.

Bob Kimball said that the commission had just received the triennial performance audit, which states that ESTA needs to respond to recommendations from the LTC. Public input helps, but it is a difficult situation with limited funding. They are restricted as to what can be done as needs must be reasonable to meet. All requests will be taken into consideration. He said that the findings from the hearing would be presented at the meeting of June 16.

Mr. Kimball closed the hearing at 10:05 a.m., and called a recess.

The meeting resumed at 10:15 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 3 Request Commission approve minutes of April 21, 2010

Beverly Brown moved to approve the minutes of April 21, 2010. Susan Cullen seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0, with an abstention by Marty Fortney.

(Item No. 4 was conducted earlier.)

ITEM NO. 5 Request Commission approve the Triennial Performance Audit for the three years ended June 30, 2009

Courtney Smith gave a brief overview of the audit. The staff report addresses those areas where the LTC is not in compliance with the TDA and sets forth how these issues will be addressed.

Bob Kimball commented that the LTC seems to be mostly in compliance, and has interaction with ESTA. Most of the items brought up from the previous audit have been addressed. He noted that there is still a question regarding allocations to IMAAA.

Courtney Smith said there would be a meeting with Jean Turner on May 25 regarding the TDA allocation to IMAAA.

Mr. Kimball asked if there would be a benefit to naming IMAAA a CTSA. Mr. Smith said that is a possible venue. He noted that three years ago, it was thought that IMAAA would be an eligible claimant because it was formed through a JPA. However, the JPA did not include the City of Bishop.

Doug Thompson, Bob Kimball, and Marty Fortney complimented staff on a job well done.

Doug Thompson moved to approve the Triennial Performance Audit for the three years ended June 30, 2009. Bruce Dishion seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

ITEM NO. 6 ESTA Report

Jill Batchelder distributed a staff report and chart detailing the first 10 months of FY 09/10. The summary of the operating statistics shows total passenger trips = 71,526, total service hours = 20,774, total service miles = 459,239, average fare = \$3.87, and the number of passengers per hour = 3.44. She also distributed a chart giving details per route. Susan Cullen asked how this compares with a year ago. Ms Batchelder said that overall it is down.

Bob Kimball said he would like to have the fare box ratio for individual routes, noting that the people who had testified wanted more service hours, or route changes.

Jill said when they have completed the budget, they will see what is available.

Marty Fortney said that mostly people wanted service extended to evenings, and extra on weekends. He asked for a cost analysis for the night bus. Jill said it costs \$58 per hour for each vehicle in the evening.

Doug Thompson asked about marketing (as mentioned in the audit). Ms Batchelder said that ESTA does the marketing, but has not had funds for it until recently. At present they are doing email marketing. Bob Kimball asked how they reach the seniors. Ms Batchelder replied that the email information to the senior centers. Mr. Kimball commented that many seniors do not have computers. John Helm said he has met individually with seniors groups to quell rumors. Doug Thompson noted that different groups have different needs, so something in the Inyo Register might be effective.

ITEM NO. 7 Tribal Report

No one was available from the Bishop Tribe, but Seth Roberts sent a printout regarding possible funding grants. Beverly Brown commented that transportation has not been a big problem on the reservation.

ITEM NO. 8 Caltrans Report

Brad Mettam reported that the transition is not open yet near Independence. Refurbishing is being done south of the reservation. Marty Fortney requested that repair be done over the cuts from the mud flow.

Mr. Mettam stated that the governor released a May budget revision showing that the budget is \$20 billion dollars “out of sync”. Many cuts are proposed, and Caltrans will have to adjust staffing.

Bob Kimball asked how Caltrans feels about the excise tax on gas instead of sales tax. Mr. Mettam said that it is a state law and Caltrans has no opinion. The State has borrowed transportation related funds in the past and paid them back. At the end of this fiscal year, the furlough Fridays are over, but they will have a floating furlough day, and there is a proposed 5% pay cut.

ITEM NO. 9 City of Bishop Report

Dave Grah said the pavement is gone on Hanby. The concrete work will be done first. They may break for Mule Days.

ITEM NO. 10 Executive Director's Report

Ted Pedersen reported that the County had their Budget Kick-off meeting.

He noted that chip seal work had been done on County Rd, Brockman, and Eastside, using Prop 1B funds, and that the road crews had done an excellent job.

Courtney Smith stated that he had submitted an allocation request for \$1 million for STIP buses.

He said that next month’s LTC meeting will include approval of the 10/11 OWP and adoption of the unmet transit needs findings.

ITEM NO. 11 Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC

Doug Thompson said the four-lane south from Independence is open for northbound traffic.

CORRESPONDENCE

Annual RSTP Exchange Information

ADJOURNMENT

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

Attest:

Ted Pedersen, Executive Director

by Linda Baffrey, Secretary