



**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**

November 18, 2009

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

ITEM NO. 1 Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Bob Kimball, Chairman
Beverly Brown
Doug Thompson
Susan Cullen
Laura Smith, alternate

Others Present: Robert Ennis
Beth Himelhoch, IMAH
Bruce Klein, Bishop Paiute Tribe
Brad Mettam, Caltrans
Forest Becket, Caltrans
David Grah, Bishop Public Works
Deston Dishion, Bishop Public Works
John Helm, ESTA
Courtney Smith, Inyo County
Linda Baffrey, Inyo County

ITEM NO. 2 Public Comment

None

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 3 Secretary of the Local Transportation Commission - Request approval of the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2009.

Susan Cullen moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2009. Doug Thompson seconded the motion. Beverly Brown and Laura Smith abstained. Motion carried 3-0.

ITEM NO. 4 Request Commission ratify a letter to Caltrans regarding Unmet Transit Needs process.

Courtney Smith explained that this letter is a follow-up to the decision made by the Commission last January to hold Unmet Needs workshops, instead of the more formal Unmet Needs hearings. Caltrans requested written notification of the LTC's change in the Unmet Needs procedures policy. Doug Thompson moved to ratify the letter. Beverly Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 5 2010 State Transportation Improvement Program Overview

Courtney Smith stated that the 2010 STIP would consist primarily of rescheduling projects carried forward from the 2008 STIP. 30 – 39% of projects programmed from 2009-10 to 2013-2014 will need to be pushed out to a year when more money comes online.

He noted that there could be a problem obtaining PTA buses for ESTA that are in the STIP, as no one has money to front for reimbursement. It may be necessary to spread the purchases, or to procure a short-term loan.

Allocations for local streets and roads are currently frozen by the CTC. It is likely that many of these projects will be programmed for 2011-2012, which could cause a “log jam”, causing some of them to be pushed back even further. Because of this it might be prudent to program projects in 2010-2011. Staff will consult with Caltrans regarding the best way to proceed.

Olancho/Cartago programming for right of way and right of way support could be pushed out to a time closer to the construction date (2013-2014 or 2014-2015). This will meet the 30 and 39% requirements to push money into future years.

Brad Mettam mentioned that projects “age” when they are moved out, so there is a question of strategy. He said that Mono County might move some projects out, and keep others in the queue. He suggested speaking directly to the CTC staff. Mr. Mettam said that the strategy needs to be mapped out before the RTIP is due on February 12.

Mr. Smith said the commission needs to work with the county and city, and plans need to be made by the January meeting or a special meeting early in February.

Beverly Brown asked if it would be brought before the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Smith said it would be an action item.

Doug Thompson said a priority list should be made. Mr. Smith said it would probably be good to “mix it up”.

Mr. Thompson asked about the bond projects. Mr. Mettam said bond sales have continued and are sufficient for current projects. Nothing currently in progress will be held up.

ITEM NO. 6 Discussion of loading zones in Lone Pine

This item was put on the agenda at the request of Margaret Warner of Lone Pine. She requested that a loading zone be installed in front of Gardner’s Hardware Store. Staff communicated to her that the LTC has no jurisdiction on the State Highway. An additional letter was received from Mr. Gwen Gardner, stating that he would like to see the red curb removed. Copies of both letters were distributed to the commissioners.

Brad Mettam stated that a year ago Caltrans had looked at each intersection in Lone Pine, and had applied minimum standards for red curbing for sight distance as a safety measure. He went on to say that Caltrans had met with the businesses, and the matter is not negotiable. Everything has been re-measured. They have looked at the possibility of loading zones, but large trucks constitute even more of a safety hazard than to regularly parked vehicles.

Beverly Brown asked how many parking spots were lost. Forest Becket stated that 3 had been added, and 10 removed, leaving a net loss of 7 out of 131.

Doug Thompson commented that this is a complicated issue. He said that for 15 years, he has worked with Caltrans regarding striping, and the possibility of taking all parking off Hwy 395. He noted that Gardner’s is a UPS shipper, and the truck must go to the right, blocking 3 or 4 diagonal parking spots, while he goes inside the store. He said the traffic safety study shows that streets would be safer with all parking off the main street. He said the delivery truck must park in the alley. He commented that Mr. Gardner is in a difficult position with no flexibility in the rules and regulations. He suggested the possibility of the purchase of property for parking lots.

Bob Kimball noted that Caltrans had worked with Bishop for the purchase of a parking lot, and maybe something similar could be done in Lone Pine. Mr. Thompson said that this had been tried before, but was not approved because of a restroom. Different pots of money can only be used for certain things. He said the community needs a design for traffic calming – a cohesive corridor look. Mr. Kimball said that the community needs a concept of what they want to do. He said this could be difficult, as people are sometimes hostile to change.

Brad Mettam commented that community design makes people aware of the town, and slow down. Mr. Thompson said there had been community meetings, and the attendance had been sparse. Mr. Mettam said Caltrans is willing to meet with the community, but they need to be cohesive, and able to work together, for landscaping, etc.

Forest Becket said that Bishop and Lone Pine are very similar, but there is probably not enough traffic in Lone Pine to completely remove parking.

Doug suggested a possible compromise. Possibly the first few parking spots on the side streets could be designated loading zones. Mr. Smith said that Ted Pedersen is looking into that possibility. Laura Smith asked if loading zones could be timed. If so, they could still be used by customers.

ITEM NO. 7 Discussion of TE Call for Projects

Mr. Smith stated that he had received two emails from Robert Ennis asking the LTC to reconsider its TE scoring criteria. He noted that its September meeting, the LTC had approved a TE Call for Projects that included scoring criteria to rate the TE applications. The Call for Projects was printed in the Inyo Register and an application package including the scoring criteria was mailed out to interested parties, with the deadline for submittal being December 31, 2009. Staff recommends not changing the scoring criteria at this time. They feel it would be more practical to re-evaluate the scoring criteria when the next call for projects is released. When the scoring criteria was initially adopted, the County had several TE projects that were struggling, and that were problematic to implement. The goal of the scoring criteria was to select projects that could be easily implemented.

Doug said it is a substantial process, and perhaps we could debate about the scoring later on.

There was a consensus to not revise the scoring criteria.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

ITEM NO. 8 ESTA Report

John Helm distributed a third quarter report to staff and the Commission. He said that ridership has been down this quarter in Inyo and Mono counties, though it is not as bad as many transit agencies statewide. Revenue is down, but costs are lower than were budgeted. The reason for the decreased ridership appears to reflect the state of the economy. The Bishop and Lone Pine Dial-a-Ride numbers are both significantly down. This may be because fewer passes have been issued by other agencies. The Bishop fixed route numbers are up and this may show a gradual transition from Dial-a-Ride to fixed routes. The CREST southbound route is up 50% because of the extended service to Lancaster. Mr. Helm reported that ESTA has received all of its grant funding except for the CREST route. The state has created a new source of funding for long-standing inter-regional bus routes, such as the CREST route, and it is taking extra time to release the funding. The new program will create a new in-kind match program.

Mr. Helm said there would be a new process for continuous funding for long-term operators, which will only involve a two-page application.

Mr. Helm reported that the Reds Meadow route was 23% above projected levels. It has been very successful, with the fees set at \$7 for adults, and \$4 for children. ESTA has an agreement with the Forest Service, that excess funds shall go to ESTA, but must be used for the Reds Meadow route.

Mr. Helm said there is a new phone number for Dial-a-Ride only. He said this is because no dispatcher is available for night runs. The new number forwards to cell phones on the buses.

Mr. Helm stated that the annual report ending June, 2009 showed a fare box revenue of 17%. This includes only one month of the Reds Meadow route.

Bob Kimball asked if ESTA had been able to repay their loans, and Mr. Helm said that last year's had all been repaid by May, and this year's will also be repaid.

ITEM NO. 9 Tribal Report

Bruce Klein stated that the Bishop Tribe is a strong supporter of ESTA. He feels they do an excellent job.

He reported that an ARRA funding meeting showed there is not much money available for the tribes.

They will review the Hwy 168 sidewalk project before a resolution of support is issued. They have not heard anything yet about the six bus shelters they have requested.

Bob Kimball inquired about the apartments being built on West Line Street. Mr. Klein said the tribe is building them. They have received money for tankless water heaters and solar panels.

Beverly Brown thanked Bruce Klein for his help with an email to Sacramento for Digital 395. She also noted that the apartments are drug and alcohol free. She said the tribe is doing great things.

Mr. Klein said they have received \$5 million in grants this year, and \$2 million in energy efficiency grants.

ITEM NO. 10 Caltrans Report

Brad Mettam said that with winter coming, some passes are closed. Weather can affect paving on highway projects. The highway north of Independence will remain two-lane, and the south portion still needs transitioning.

ITEM NO. 11 City of Bishop Report

Dave Grah reported that all STIP projects are delayed. These are Project A, Pine, and Sneden. Hanby is moving along. Paving will be done in the spring. He said the City wants a new alignment for the Pine to Park Path. Bob Kimball asked if new environmental work would be required. Mr. Grah said it would. He said the Seibu to School path is a joint project between the city and the tribe. It will also require additional environmental work - possibly with TE funds.

ITEM NO. 12 Executive Director's Report

Courtney Smith noted that the Executive Director is attending a CEAC meeting. Mr. Smith reported that at the October 19, 2009 ECTPP meeting, SANBAG and Caltrans staff indicated that they are still proceeding with the environmental document for the long-term realignment of US 395 in the Victor Valley.

He also said that the consultants have completed a Pavement Condition Report for all paved roads in the County and the City of Bishop. The report will be ready for viewing in the near future.

ITEM NO. 13 Reports from all members of the Inyo County LTC
Beverly Brown reported that she had received two fraudulent phone calls from people claiming to be from Publishers Clearing House and Bank of America. She cautioned everyone to be careful, and not give out any personal information.

Doug Thompson stated that the CREST route is working. Hikers from the John Muir Trail are using it, as are people wishing to travel to Lancaster. He noted that the schedule is posted on the ESTA website. Mr. Thompson also announced that the USDA director would be in Lone Pine to go over rural problems.

CORRESPONDENCE

Copy of first quarter report and invoice to State

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Kimball adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Attest:
Ted Pedersen,
Executive Director

By Linda Baffrey, Secretary