Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) - Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 26, 2026, 8:30 a.m.
Dual Locations: Bishop Council Chambers and Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers
Bishop Council Chambers 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514
Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers 437 Old Mammoth Rd., Ste Z Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Members Present:	Vice Chair Trina Orrill, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland, Alternate Board Member Bill Sauser
Members Absent:	Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member Vice Chair Karen Kong

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Trina Orrill called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chambers, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA. Alternate Board Member Bill Sauser attended the meeting in the Mammoth Lakes Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Member John Wentworth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments given at this time.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Board Member Karen Schwartz
Seconded by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Approve the Consent Agenda.

For (6): Vice Chair Trina Orrill, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland, and Alternate Board Member Bill Sauser

Absent (2): Board Member Lynda Salcido, and Board Member Vice Chair Karen Kong

Carried (6 to 0)

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2026

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Approve Amendment No. 1 to Agreement Between ESCOG and Kenneth Etzel for the Provision of Regional Recreation Coordination Services to extend the term and increase total compensation.

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths
Seconded by Board Member Paul McFarland

Approve Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement between the ESCOG and Kenneth Etzel, including both the term extension to December 31, 2026, and the updated compensation limit of $125,000, to enable completion of remaining Sierra Jobs First and Inyo National Forest (INF) recreation capacity and project development work.

For (6): Vice Chair Trina Orrill, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland, and Alternate Board Member Bill Sauser

Absent (2): Board Member Lynda Salcido, and Board Member Vice Chair Karen Kong

Carried (6 to 0)

5.2 Approve Sierra Jobs First No-Cost Extension Program between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Funding Awards and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Approve participation in the Sierra Jobs First no-cost extension program and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute amended agreements extending each project through June 30, 2027.

For (6): Vice Chair Trina Orrill, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Karen Schwartz, Board Member Paul McFarland, and Alternate Board Member Bill Sauser

Absent (2): Board Member Lynda Salcido, and Board Member Vice Chair Karen Kong

Carried (6 to 0)

5.3 Receive a Presentation from Lindsay Gucker, Plena Planning, and Provide Direction on the Sierra Jobs First Eastern Sierra Agriculture Activation Plan

Executive Director Elaine Kabala provided background on this item and introduced Plena Planning Founder Lindsay Gucker.

Ms. Gucker outlined the information in the Eastern Sierra Agriculture Activation Plan Presentation.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Ms. Gucker, and members of the Board.

Staff was given direction to go back to the member agencies to discuss the addition of agriculture as an area of focus under Economic Development, and to consider that the ESCOG serve as a convener and conduit for grant money with buy-in from its respective boards.

5.4 Receive Presentation from Tim Bevin, Alta Planning + Design, and Provide Direction on the Sierra Jobs First Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis

Regional Recreation Coordinator Ken Etzel provided background on this item and introduced Alta Planning + Design Senior Design Associate Tim Bevins.

Mr. Bevins outlined the information in the Chipmunk Canyon Phase 1 Study Presentation.

There was discussion between Mr. Bevins, staff, and members of the Board.

5.5 Receive a Presentation from Seana Doherty, Agnew::Beck Consulting and Provide Direction on the Eastern Sierra Collaborative and ESCOG Strategic Planning Framework

Executive Director Elaine Kabala provided background on this item and introduced Agnew::Beck Consulting Senior Manager Seana Doherty.

Ms. Doherty outlined the information in the ESCOG Strategic Planning Process Presentation.

There was discussion between Ms. Doherty, Ms. Kabala, and members of the Board.

Staff was given direction to have the Steering Committee meet prior to the September 18th special meeting to provide focus, identify what things the ESCOG might want to invest in, determine staff capacity, and establish the ESCOG's role, purpose and benefit in the region.

5.6 Receive a Presentation on the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance Application Process for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Landscape Grant Program

Wildfire Coordinator Kristen Pfeiler and Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance Presentation and staff report.

There was discussion between staff and members of the Board.

5.7 Receive ESCOG Staff Update Reports

5.7.1 ESCOG Executive Director

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

5.7.2 ESCOG Wildfire Coordinator

Written report only.

5.7.3 ESCOG Recreation Coordinator

Written report only.

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member John Wentworth reported that there would be an Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) meeting on Monday which would include a substantial update on the Sierra Jobs First closeout.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths announced that Inyo County recently amended their personnel policy to create a new leave bank of forty hours per year for volunteer first responders, such as Search and Rescue Team Members, Firefighters, etc. He said they were possibly the first in the State to do so.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items requested.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m. to a special meeting scheduled to be held on September 18th. The next regular meeting, scheduled to be held on October 28th, will need to be rescheduled at a later date.

Angela Plaisted
Administrative Coordinator