

# EASTERN SIERRA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

## Minutes of Friday, January 23, 2009

The Board of Directors of the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority, State of California, met at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009, at the Town of Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers, Minaret Village Shopping Center, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes California. The following members were present: Skip Harvey, Susan Cash, Vikki Bauer, Susan Cullen, Jeff Griffiths, Linda Arcularius, John Eastman and Byng Hunt. Director Skip Harvey led the pledge of allegiance.

- Public Comment                      The Chairperson opened the public comment period at 10:07 a.m. There was no one from the public wishing to address the Board. Public Comment was closed.
- Consent Agenda                      Moved by Director Hunt and seconded by Director Eastman to approve the minutes of the ESTA Board of Directors Meeting of December 12, 2008. Motion carried 7-0 with Director Arcularius abstaining.
- Operations Report                    Transit Director Monicka Watterson gave the Operations Report for the month of December. Ms. Watterson stated that ridership increased for December. Most of the increases were on the route services in Mammoth. Ms. Watterson reported that ridership is up on the Mammoth Express and slightly down on the Lone Pine to Bishop and the Local Lone Pine routes. Director Cash questioned whether ESTA was still operating charter services. Mr. Helm reported that there are strict provisions that prohibit recipients of federal transit money from operating charter services. The reason for these regulations is due to concerns of competition with the private sector. There are means for federal recipients to operate charters but they are so cumbersome as to make it impractical to be able to comply. The penalty for violation is loss of all federal funds.
- Treasurer's Report                    Treasurer Auditor/Controller Brad Koehn reported there are sufficient funds to meet the next 30 days of obligations. Mr. Koehn reported there are enough funds to pay back a portion of the lines of credit to the Town of Mammoth and Mono County so that all four entities will have contributed \$81,250.00 to the line of credit for ESTA.

Kern Regional Transit Agreement

Moved by Director Bauer and seconded by Director Cullen to approve the agreement between Kern Regional Transit and Eastern Sierra Transit Authority for the compensation of ESTA's increased operating costs, and authorize the Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board of Directors. Motion carried 8-0.

Letter of Support

Director Bauer developed a proposal for support among multiple government and transit agencies enlisting support for the inclusion of operating and maintenance funding within the Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program. Director Arcularius requested that the letter be modified to include a statement that Inyo County receives zero federal transit operating dollars. Director Cash requested that the phrasing regarding the affect on climate change be clarified. Moved by Director Hunt and seconded by Director Cash to approve the letter of support as amended requesting that operating and maintenance funds be included in the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program and authorize the Chair to sign the letter on behalf of the Board of Directors. Motion carried 8-0.

Structural Budget Deficit

Mr. Helm reported to the Board that ESTA had applied for a total of \$205,000 in grant funding through the Federal Transit Administration Section 5316/5317 programs. On January 13<sup>th</sup>, staff was informed by the Caltrans Headquarters in Sacramento that administers these programs, the Authority had been recommended for funding for three of the four grant applications. These grants will provide a total of \$170,000 per year for the next two years to help offset existing operating costs for the Lone Pine to Bishop route, the Mammoth Express route, and to fund Mobility Management services. The recommendation for funding is tentative at this time and must be approved by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA). It is expected that this approval will come about and that the grant will be finalized by the end of April. Revenues should be sufficient to fund the current level of service in this fiscal year. Mr. Helm also reported to the Board that State Transit Assistance (STA) funding is likely to be discontinued. Based upon expected revenues next fiscal year, operating expenses will exceed revenues by approximately \$140,000. Moved by Director Arcularius and seconded by Director Cash to direct staff to bring back to the Board possible modifications in current service levels or expenditures to attain a balanced budget in FY09/10. Motion carried 8-0.

## Vehicle Graphics

Director Harvey had requested at the December meeting that the Board revisit the subject of vehicle graphics. Mr. Helm stated that ESTA has \$33,000 available in existing grant funds for vehicle graphics. Director Harvey stated that the Town of Mammoth Lakes Arts Commission is eager to get started on the implementation of large graphics on the Town owned vehicles. After a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to have staff bring back a new design for vehicle graphics incorporating the colors of the new Eastern Sierra Transit logo. Moved by Director Harvey and seconded by Director Bauer to direct staff to bring back to the Board a design on a white bus with the logo on the side of the bus and flowing stripes across the front of the bus with the option of adding a postcard graphic if desired. The Board would also like staff to investigate the practicality of putting lighting around the destinations signs on the vehicles and adding a "caution" sign on the back of the bus to warn other motorists of pedestrians. Motion carried 8-0.

## Reports

Director Harvey thanked Mr. Helm for dealing with a local transit issue in the Town of Mammoth the Sunday following Christmas. ESTA staff was able to put an additional vehicle on the road to help transport guests from town to the Village resulting in fewer situations where passengers are passed up by full buses. Mr. Helm rode the bus to make sure all was running smoothly. Mr. Helm also was able to assist parents of elementary school children in Mammoth by slightly modifying the route in the morning to allow the kids to ride the Midtown Lift route to get to school easily and safely.

Mr. Helm reported to the Board that driving staff has received new jackets as part of their uniform. He also reported that Mono County has used STIP funds to purchase three commuter vans to be used for vanpool services in Mono County.

## Future Agenda Items

Director Bauer requested a comparison of Mammoth Mountain and ESTA transit services in the Town of Mammoth.

## Recess / Reconvene Closed Session

The Chairperson recessed the meeting at 12:17 p.m. for a five-minute break. The Board reconvened in Closed Session at 12:25 p.m. with all Board Members present to consider:  
Agenda Item #14 a Conference with Labor Negotiators. (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6) – Authority designated representatives; John Helm, Monicka Watterson, Sue Dishion, and Mark Magit. Bargaining group; AFSCME;  
Agenda Item #14 b. Conference with Labor Negotiators. (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6).

Representatives- John Helm and Sue Dishion. Bargaining group; ESTA Management & Confidential Employees Association, and;  
Agenda Item #14 c. Performance evaluation of the Executive Director. (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957).

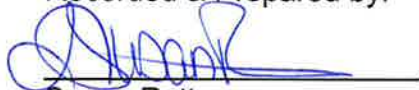
Report on Closed Session

Chairman Griffiths reported on Closed Session regarding agenda item #14b. Following the meeting in closed session the Board found by unanimous vote that there has been no further movement in the negotiations with Management & Confidential Employee Association. Therefore, the negotiations have reached an impasse. A formal resolution declaring impasse will be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Adjournment

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1:44 p.m. to a Special Meeting to be held on Monday, February 2, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the City of Bishop.

Recorded & Prepared by:



Susan Rottner  
Board Clerk  
Eastern Sierra Transit Authority

Minutes approved: **February 20, 2009**