

# MINUTES



# County of Inyo Board of Supervisors

**April 27, 2021**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, met in regular session at the hour of 10:01 a.m., on April 27, 2021, in the Board of Supervisors Room, County Administrative Center, Independence, with the following Supervisors present via videoconferencing per California Governor Executive Order N-25-20: Chairperson Jeff Griffiths, presiding, Dan Totheroh, Rick Pucci, Jennifer Roeser, and Matt Kingsley. Also present: County Administrative Officer Clint Quilter, Assistant Clerk of the Board Darcy Ellis, and County Counsel Marshall Rudolph.

*Pledge of Allegiance* Supervisor Griffiths led the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Public Comment* Chairperson Griffiths asked if there was any public comment pending for items not calendared on the agenda.

Ann Strohm of Bishop said she was profoundly disappointed in the Board's decision to kill the homeless safe parking project. She said 10 weeks have passed and she would like to know what the Board has done to address the need. She also concurred with a commenter from last week who suggested the Board appoint one of its members to serve as a point person on the issue, and also asked for an agendized update at the next meeting.

High Sierra Energy Foundation Executive Director Pam Bold announced that the organization has used an LADWP grant to provide the County funding for energy-efficient lighting at its parks. Bold received the thanks of the Board and Assistant County Administrator Leslie Chapman.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board read aloud a letter from Deena Davenport-Conway expressing dismay with the Board's rejection of the homeless safe parking project and urging the Board to not brush the issue under the rug, but deal with it with compassion.

*County Department Reports* HHS Director Marilyn Mann reported on last Friday's virtual flag raising for Children's Memorial Day, and announced that Wednesday is Denim Day in support of sexual assault victims and survivors, and that May is both Mental Health Awareness Month and CalFresh Awareness Month.

Sheriff Jeff Hollowell reported that during last Saturday's Drug Takeback event, his department collected 198 pounds of unused/unwanted prescription medication for the DEA to destroy. He added that his office will be participating in Denim Day.

*COVID-19 Staff Update* The Board heard staff's weekly update on the status of COVID-19 cases locally, as well as state and national trends. Staff also updated the Board on the distribution on vaccines and ongoing testing. HHS Director Marilyn Mann said Inyo County continues to have low case numbers and will be adjudicating the State's data for Inyo County with respect to its tier metrics. She said she fully expects the State to find that Inyo County has achieved orange-level metrics for the past week.

Deputy Public Health Director Anna Scott said last weekend's mass Pfizer vaccination clinic in Bishop was a success, with 496 vaccines administered, and thanked NIH and the many volunteers who helped. She said a mass clinic will be held on Thursday in Lone Pine at Statham Hall.

Public Health Officer Dr. James Richardson provided an update on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the latest CDC changes to recommendations, with more changes expected. He

also discussed options for travel for those who have and have not been vaccinated but who also have had COVID.

Tamara Cohn of Independence asked whether vaccines are available at Dwayne's in Bishop. Dr. Richardson recommended reaching out to the pharmacy directly.

Assistant County Administrator Leslie Chapman announced that the registration for State restaurant revitalization funding opened this morning.

### *Introductions*

The following new employees were introduced to the Board: Danelle Barnett, Office Technician III, HHS; Anna Ramos, COVID-19 Case Investigator, HHS; Nikolas Athanasiou, Network & Operations Analyst IV, Information Services; Rochelle Romo, Office Technician III, Information Services; and Graham Meese, Assistant Planner, Planning Department.

### *Probation – Office Clerk I-II*

Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Pucci for the Board to find that, consistent with the adopted Authorized Position Review Policy: A) the availability of funding for one (1) Office Clerk exists in the General Fund, as certified by the Chief Probation Officer and concurred with by the County Administrator and Auditor-Controller; B) where internal candidates may meet the qualifications for the position, the vacancy could possibly be filled through an internal recruitment, but an open recruitment is more appropriate to ensure qualified applicants apply; and C) approve the hiring of one (1) Office Clerk I at Range 48 (\$2,851 - \$3,454) or one (1) Office Clerk II at Range 52 (\$3,118 - \$3,788). Motion carried unanimously.

### *Water Department – Joint BOS-Water Commission Workshop*

Water Department Director Dr. Aaron Steinwand introduced a workshop with the Board and Inyo County Water Commission on conditions in the Owens Valley and the LADWP draft 2021-2022 Pumping Plan. Commissioners in attendance: Randy Keller, Nate Gratz, Holly Aspel, Paul Huette. Absent: Commission Chair Teri Red Owl.

Steinwand reviewed the plan through a PowerPoint presentation, noting that LADWP proposes pumping between 64,600 and 78,980 acre-feet. He reported that with runoff at a dismal 55% of normal and all signs pointing to drought, Water Department staff is recommending LADWP pump 59,377 acre-feet this pumping year in order to maintain current baseline conditions.

Water Commission Vice Chair Randy Keller said the Commission as a whole does not have a recommendation on the plan but does agree on some key points, mainly that a very conservative pumping plan is appropriate to maintain current water levels, given the drought and potential "mega drought" which leaves no assurances for future wet years being able to regenerate groundwater. He also noted a lot of concern surrounding pumping in the Big Pine area. Nate Gratz said it's important to remember that the Water Agreement was created after the "cup was already half empty" and baseline conditions were already below what they should be. Holly Aspel said not only is the valley looking at a second year of drought, but all of Inyo County is in exceptional drought according to monitors, and dry climate is becoming the new normal. She said a conservative, prudent pumping scheme should be the approach not just this year, but all years. Paul Huette said they need to look at what's going on in the entire valley – it's drying up because of pumping. He said they also need to consider the human impacts (dust pollution) in addition to impacts on vegetation. He said advocating for just enough pumping to maintain the current status quo would leave the Big Pine and Laws wellfields still below baseline levels, and suggested keeping pumping to low enough number that all wellfields can be at baseline.

Supervisor Roeser inquired about the proposed pumping in Big Pine this year, and asked if it's lower than usual because the Fish Springs Hatchery required less water. Dr. Steinwand confirmed this and explained the process for the County requesting a permanent reduction in pumping for the hatchery, which will ultimately require replacement of the constant-speed pump with variable speed pumps and Standing Committee approval.

Supervisor Pucci said the County has done a lot of reacting to LADWP but not taken a lot of proactive steps. He said there will always be drought years, and getting complacent in wetter years is a mistake.

Supervisor Kingsley said this is the first time the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has ever acknowledged that maybe the hatchery doesn't need that much water and he thinks it's worth the effort to find a permanent solution to facilitate less pumping. He said there needs to

be a pumping program, long-term, that preserves baseline levels during dry years and allows aquifer recharge during wetter years. He added that he is impressed with the level of engagement on the Water Commission.

Edie Trimmer of Big Pine expressed gratitude for the joint workshop. She said she and a friend visited several LADWP mitigation sites over the past 6 months and in their lay view, a lot of them are not meeting goals and some are pretty sad looking. She said there should be a way to make LADWP more proactive in ensuring these projects succeed.

Chairperson Griffiths said her latter point is a universal desire, noting that it's very difficult to bring back an ecosystem once it's been destroyed.

*Water Department –  
County Response to  
LADWP 21-22  
Pump Plan*

The Board was asked to possibly provide direction concerning the LADWP draft 2021-2022 Pumping Plan – specifically, a draft response from the County that was prepared by the Water Department. The Board was in agreement with the Water Department's recommendation to recommend LADWP pump no more than 58,377 acre-feet this year.

Sally Miller of Big Pine, noting the County has both good Water Commissioners and Supervisors, advocated for an even lower pumping total to put LADWP on alert and let them know the Owens Valley means business. She also said the County should advocate for a long-term pumping plan.

Because the draft response had not been made available to the public yet, staff was instructed to post it online so that the public could review it before the Board took action on it. The Chairperson said the agenda will be revisited later this afternoon.

*CAO – CA Surplus  
Property Program*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to: A) approve the application and all supporting documents for the State of California Surplus Property Program and authorize the County Administrative Officer to sign the Application Checklist and the Donee Terms and Conditions Form and authorize the Chairperson to sign the remaining forms; and B) authorize the County Administrative Officer to update the Certification on an annual basis. Motion carried unanimously.

*Information Services  
– Modified Ultra Link  
Cabling Agreement*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to modify the amount authorized in the agreement between the County of Inyo and Ultra Link Cabling Systems, Inc., of Auburn, CA, increasing the agreement amount not to exceed \$220,000, and authorize the Public Works Director or the Information Services Director to sign, contingent upon all appropriate signatures being obtained. Motion carried unanimously.

*HHS-Behavioral  
Health – Laura's Law  
Opt-Out/ Reso #  
2021-28*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve Resolution No. 2021-28, titled, "A Resolution of the Board of Supervisors, County of Inyo, State of California, Declaring that Inyo County will Opt Out of the Adoption of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (Laura's Law) and Certifying that all Mental Health Treatment Programs will Continue and that No Treatment or Service will be Reduced without Adoption of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (Laura's Law) by Inyo County," and authorize the Chairperson to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

*HHS-Public Health –  
CDPH WIC  
Amendment A02*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve Amendment No. A02 to the contract between the County of Inyo Department of Health and Human Services and the California Department of Public Health for the California Women, Infants, and Children Contract, increasing the contract by \$30,190, not to exceed \$1,150,112, for the period of October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2022, contingent upon the Board's approval of future budgets, and authorize the HHS Director to sign Standard Agreement No. 19-10153 Amendment A02. Motion carried unanimously.

*Risk Management –  
Proposed Claim  
Related Ordinance*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to introduce, read title, and waive further reading of the proposed ordinance amending Chapter 1.28 of the Inyo County Code pertaining to claims, and schedule enactment for Tuesday, May 4, 2021, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Administrative Center, Independence. Motion carried unanimously.

*Clerk of the Board –  
Approval of Minutes*

Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to approve the minutes of the regular Board of Supervisors meeting of April 20, 2021.

<i>Recess/Reconvene</i>	The Chairperson recessed the meeting at 12:47 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1:31 p.m. with all Board members present.
<i>BOS – IFNF Grant Program Presentation</i>	Laura Drescher and Seth Brown of Quantified Adventures gave a presentation on the Innovative Finance for National Forests (IFNF) grant program and opportunities related to Inyo National Forest campgrounds.
<i>BOS – ESSRP Initiative Update</i>	John Wentworth, of the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership and the Mammoth Lakes Trail and Public Access Foundation, provided the Board with an update on the Sustainable Recreation & Tourism Initiative.
<i>Water Department – County Response to LADWP 21-22 Pump Plan (continued)</i>	<p>After giving the public a chance to review the County’s proposed response, the Board took up item 11 again.</p> <p>Daris Moxley of Bishop thanked Dr. Steinwand for mentioning Type E vegetation in the draft letter. She said it seems to be getting ignored that green stuff is supposed to stay green, and asked what happens if LADWP doesn’t like the County’s pumping recommendation. Dr. Steinwand explained that within 10 days of the County issuing its response, the Technical Group will meet to discuss the comments and then LADWP will finalize the pumping plan and, if it ignores the County’s comments, the Board can decide whether to formally object to the plan – a lengthy process that allows the pumping to go in the meantime. Ms. Moxley asked why, then, the County and public bother to go through this review process if LADWP will get to pump what it wants anyway. She said under the Long-Term Water Agreement, conditions are supposed to be maintained to 1981-82 levels and said anyone with eyes can see it’s worse than 81-82. Supervisor Kingsley made the point that before the Water Agreement, LADWP was pumping almost twice what they pump now, so the LTWA has had benefits in the valley’s favor.</p> <p>Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Kingsley to approve the County’s response to the LADWP draft 2021-2022 Pumping Plan. Motion carried unanimously.</p>
<i>Public Comment</i>	<p>The Chairperson solicited public comment for the final public comment period.</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk of the Board did not receive any emailed comments and nobody requested to speak to the Board via the “hand-waving” feature on Zoom.</p>
<i>Board Member and Staff Reports</i>	<p>Supervisor Roeser reported on last week’s LTC meeting, where she said a lot of public comment was gathered, and said she also attended meetings with constituents and the First 5 Commission meeting.</p> <p>Supervisor Kingsley reported meeting with Forest Service officials, and showing the new RCRC director around the county.</p> <p>Assistant Clerk of the Board Darcy Ellis reported that last the 2021 Board meeting calendar was created last winter with an anticipated conflict that created uncertainty for the May 25 meeting. She said that conflict no longer exists, and sought direction from the Board whether the May 25 should be scheduled. The Board directed that it be scheduled.</p> <p>Chairperson Griffiths said he attended another meeting on the veterans housing project, last week’s virtual CSAC Legislative Conference, and last night’s Bishop City Council meeting.</p> <p>Supervisor Tothoroh said he met with Chairperson Griffiths and HHS staff yesterday to discuss conscious and unconscious bias and how to ensure clients are being dealt with inclusively. He said he also had additional conversations with Larry Emerson of IMACA regarding the safe parking project and so far 12 sites have been identified but only one landowner – Church of the Nazarene – is interested, and everyone knows how that went last time.</p>
<i>Adjournment</i>	Chairperson Griffiths adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 4, 2021 in the County Administrative Center in Independence.

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Chairperson, Inyo County Board of Supervisors

*Attest: CLINT G. QUILTER  
Clerk of the Board*

by: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Darcy Ellis, Assistant*