

# MINUTES



# County of Inyo Board of Supervisors

## January 26, 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 January 26, 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 Tothoroh, Jeff Griffiths, 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* Chairperson 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.

Nina Weisman addressed the Board with concerns about the high rate of COVID-19 in the county as well as churches being continued to meet indoors besides it being prohibited. She said she has heard reports of church-goers not wearing masks or distancing and noted that these can become super-spreader events. She said it is not safe to rollback any restrictions until Inyo County is well out of the purple tier (in the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy).

Paul Huette, utility operator for the Big Pine Paiute Tribe and member of the Inyo County Water Commission, spoke to the Board about current drought conditions and in particular over-pumping in the Fish Springs area, and asked that the issue stay on the Board's radar.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board read aloud a letter from Kristin Carr of Bishop advocating for the elderly population and the need to make them top priority in vaccine distribution. She said there is no reason why a healthy 30-year-old receptionist working behind a Plexiglass protector in a dentist office received the vaccine before her 90-year-old mother.

*County Department Reports* Water Department Director Aaron Steinwand reported to the Board that current precipitation levels have this year on track to be the driest on record in 6 years (22% of normal); that there will be public Owens Valley Groundwater Authority outreach meetings on February 10 and 16; and that the Water Commission requested a workshop with the Board at its last meeting so staff will be organizing one for March.

*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, as well as the lifting of the regional Stay-at-Home Order which by default places Inyo County in the purple tier in the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy. During lengthy discussions, the Chairperson asked for public comment.

Ken Cluff asked via Zoom whether there has been a super-spreader event in Inyo County besides the outbreak at Bishop Care Center. HHS Deputy Director-Public Health Anna Scott said the care center was the largest of local outbreaks but there have been others that were either workplace based or resulting from large private gatherings – resulting in about 10-20 new cases each. Mr. Cluff also asked whether the coronavirus has mutated beyond the capabilities of the vaccine. Public Health Officer Dr. James Richardson said both vaccines are believed to be effective against the current variants of the virus that are transmittable, but noted that people have to get the vaccines before the virus multiplies to a different variant. Mr. Cluff also said he believes the public will comply better to public health guidelines in response to a hopeful, rather than negative, message.

Chairperson Griffiths said he is happy the Stay-at-Home Order has been lifted, but is concerned the public will take this as a sign that it's safe to go out and party, especially since the messaging from the State has been confusing at best and the Super Bowl usually means lots of private gatherings.

Joshua Nicholson asked Dr. Richardson where he gets his numbers/information from. Dr. Richardson said he gathers information from various sources, but a lot of what he quotes comes directly from a former head of the CDC and Harvard epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch.

Lynne Greer spoke to applaud Ms. Scott on her efforts.

*HHS-Social Services  
– Program  
Supervisor*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Roeser to:

- A) change the authorized strength in the Health & Human Services department by deleting one Human Services Supervisor position at Range 70 and adding one Program Supervisor (State Merit System title) at Range 70; and
  1. consistent the adopted Authorized Position Review Policy, find that:
  2. availability of funding for one (1) Program Supervisor exists in the non-General Fund Social Services budget, as certified by the HHS Director and concurred with by the County Administrator and Auditor-Controller;
  3. where internal candidates may meet the qualifications for the position, the vacancy could possibly be filled through an internal recruitment, but as a State Merit System position, an open recruitment is more appropriate to ensure qualified applicants apply;
- B) approve the hiring of one (1) Program Supervisor Range 70 (\$4,753 - \$5,781); and if an internal candidate is hired into the position, authorize HHS to backfill any resulting vacancy.

Motion carried unanimously.

*CAO-Emergency  
Services – EMPG  
Grant/Reso#2021-12*

Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to: A) approve the submittal of the Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program Application and authorize the County Administrator, as the designated Authorized Agent, to sign the grant application, as well as any and all accompanying documents, by approving the "Governing Board Resolution No. 2021-12;" and B) authorize the Chairperson to sign the resolution and addendum letter. Motion carried unanimously.

*CAO-Emergency  
Services & Sheriff –  
HSGP Grant/Reso#  
2021-13*

Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to: A) approve the submittal of the Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Homeland Security Grant (HSGP) Application and authorize the County Administrator, as the designated Authorized Agent, to sign the grant application, as well as any and all accompanying documents, by approving the "Governing Board Resolution No. 2021-13;" and B) authorize the Chairperson to sign the resolution and the addendum letter. Motion carried unanimously.

*HHS-EMCC -  
Appointments*

Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to: A) appoint the following individuals to unexpired two-year terms on the Emergency Medical Care Committee ending December 31, 2022: Danny Macbrohn, representing Southern Inyo Fire Protection District; Peter Spiers, representing Southern Inyo Healthcare District; Carl Bursell, representing Lone Pine Fire Department; Jacinda Thomsen, representing Northern Inyo Healthcare District; Joe Dell, representing Bishop Fire Department; and LeRoy Kritz, member at-large; B) appoint Wendy Derr to a recently vacated member at-large unexpired two-year term expiring December 31, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

*HHS-ESAAA -  
Appointments*

Moved by Supervisor Roeser and seconded by Supervisor Totheroh to: A) reappoint Roger Rasche, Sandra Lund, and Rachel Lober to unexpired two-year terms on the Eastern Sierra Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, ending December 11, 2022; and B) appoint Heidi Dougherty to an unexpired two-year term on the Eastern Sierra Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, ending December 11, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

*HHS-  
Health&Prevention –  
Emily Faircloth  
Contract*

Moved by Supervisor Kingsley and seconded by Supervisor Pucci to ratify and approve the Contract between the County of Inyo and Emily Faircloth for the provision of evaluation services for the Inyo County Tobacco Education Program, in an amount not to exceed \$60,000, for the period of January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, contingent upon the Board's approval of future budgets. Motion carried unanimously.

*Environmental Health – CAEHA Contract* Moved by Supervisor Totheroh and seconded by Supervisor Pucci to ratify and approve the contract between the County of Inyo and the California Association of Environmental Health Administrators for the term ending June 30, 2021 in amount not to exceed \$80,000, contingent upon appropriate signatures, and authorize the Chairperson to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

*Public Comment* The Chairperson solicited public comment for the final public comment period.

The Assistant Clerk of the Board read aloud a letter submitted by Noah Williams, speaking on his own behalf, as a concerned citizen, a lifelong resident of Payahuunadu, and in his role as Water Program Coordinator for the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley. Williams asked that the Board address and consult with the Big Pine Tribe on any issues related to groundwater pumping at Fish Springs, noting that the Tribe's requests to LADWP to curb pumping have gone ignored.

Nobody requested to speak to the Board via the "hand-waving" feature on Zoom.

*Board Member and Staff Reports* Supervisor Kingsley said he has spent a lot of time over the last couple of months on the search committee for a new Rural County Representatives of California president and the search is finally coming to a close.

Supervisor Pucci said he attended last night's meeting of the Emergency Medical Care Committee.

Supervisor Totheroh said he attended three Zoom meetings with State related to Behavioral Health Committees, and will have a Northern Inyo Airport Advisory Committee meeting on Monday.

Chairperson Griffiths said he participated in a coordination meeting with the California State Association of Counties' HHS Policy Committee, and will have an Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation meeting on Thursday.

Supervisor Roeser reported on a strike team meeting involving the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable and deferred maintenance projects.

*Adjournment* Chairperson Griffiths adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, February 2, 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*